

FAMILY PICTURES,
A
N O V E L.

CONTAINING

Curious and Interesting MEMOIRS
of several Persons of Fashion in
W——re.

Still in the paths of honour persevere,
And not from past or present ills despair ;
For blessings ever wait on virtuous deeds,
And though a late, a sure reward succeeds.
CONGREVE.

By a L A D Y.

In TWO VOLUMES.

V O L. II.

L O N D O N :

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EXTRA PICTURES

A

NOVEL

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to the general reader.

BY A. R. D. Y.

IN TWO VOLUMES.

VOL. II.

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FAMILY PICTURES;

A

NOVEL.

M_{RS.} *Bentley* was so kind to her niece, as to suffer *Arabella* to beat and pinch her, without check or controul. The poor infant was very uneasy for some time, at the great change she experienced, and would alternately call upon her Papa and Mamma to save her ; but at length custom began to reconcile her even to the cruel usage, when an excellent thought occurred to her

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uncle's

uncle's imagination. He judged it very hard to be kept out of seven hundred pounds a year by such a little child. This noble sentiment he frequently revolved in his own mind, before he was so far abandoned as to communicate it to his wife ; nor did he abruptly open his heart even to her, but just insinuated that it was a mortifying circumstance, that his brother and sister had not been taken off three years sooner than they were, as *Anthony* would not then have been excluded from his right by a little sniveling girl. The wife readily concurred with him in his opinions, observing that it was to little purpose that the boy had been named after his uncle, as the estate was now gone from him. But notwithstanding this
encou-



encouraging declaration, *Daniel* had so much artifice as to leave her, to reflect upon what he had hinted, in hopes of drawing a proposal from her of some kind or other, which might bring his purposes to bear, as he chose to appear to follow in this respect rather than to lead.

Mrs. *Bentley* now began to conceive an utter distaste to the poor *Louisa*, and it would have been happy for her, if her grand-father could have been apprised of the dangers that threatened her. Whatever she said was considered by her aunt as ridiculous and apish, and her little actions were all thought troublesome and stupid. This good woman in the end worked her aversion to the little innocent to such a pitch, that she declared

to her husband, she could no longer bear the very sight of her. The kind husband expressed much concern at it, as he had not, he said, the power of removing her so precipitantly, without giving grounds to suspect their want of affection for her. He added, he was not at all surprised at her antipathy to the little usurper, but that there was no redressing the grievance, unless they could mutually fix upon some scheme of disposing of her in such a manner, as to prevent her ever again becoming an incumbrance or impediment to them or their children. "Oh! for the means, cried the excellent mother hastily, can you not fix upon them?"

"My dear, replied the deep designer, there is nothing but a journey to London that could be effectual,

effectual, and that you have no liking to." "Liking! returned she, I would undertake a pilgrimage in such a cause; therefore depend upon my hearty concurrence and assistance."

Having advanced thus far, *Daniel* determined not to recede, and with the joint approbation and direction of his help-mate, he wrote to inform Mr. *Parker*, that being obliged to take a journey to London, together with his wife, upon some extraordinary business, they proposed carrying *Arabella* and the little *Louisa* along with them, and accordingly, before an answer could reach them, lest it should contain a prohibition with respect to the latter, they actually set forward for the great Metropolis.

Mrs. *Bentley* had an aunt in London, with whom, as we have already mentioned, at one period of her life, she spent three months. To this woman was a letter dispatched, to beg she would provide them lodgings. She was a colonel's widow, who being given to the same extravagant turn with herself, on his death, she was reduced to the slight income of forty pounds a year (pension) for subsistence. This was so far from being sufficient to answer the purposes of her heart, and so unable was she to confine her expenses within such narrow limits, that she was frequently obliged to make over this small pittance at very great disadvantages, to satisfy those creditours who proved most clamorous.

When

When she received her niece's request, she was in possession of only five guineas in the world, of which particulars this noble family were not ignorant, and therefore she was judged a fit instrument to effect the base design they had now in view. The lodging she had provided for them, was in Ruffel-street, Bloomsbury, where they soon arrived, attended only by one servant besides their coachman. The former was dismissed in a short time for some trifling misdemeanour, they apprehending him to be rather an unsafe person to continue with them at that season, as the fellow had unfortunately given proofs, upon several occasions, of common sense and uncommon honesty. They judged it improper, however, to turn him

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entirely adrift in a strange place upon so trifling a pretense, as that they had discharged him upon, and therefore Mrs. *Blackiston*, the aunt, was commissioned to get him (by means of some of her acquaintance) another place.

Various were the consultations held by this unworthy committee, before they could form their desired scheme to their satisfaction. They could not, perhaps, in the whole kingdom have met with another person of Mrs. *Blackiston's* happy qualifications for their purpose.

She was mistress of a good address, and a general knowledge of the town, by which we understand a knowledge of the world, and had an appearance of sincerity in her words

words and actions, capable of eluding the penetration of a privy-councillour.

Her advice was to search out some honest well-meaning woman, whose narrow circumstances might induce her to receive this heiress for a tolerable gratuity into her care, as the natural child of a great man, who had been compelled by his father, since her birth, to marry a lady of prodigious fortune, and particular nice honour, and that on the concealment of this unhappy child the peace and happiness of many worthy families depended; that she had been tenderly bred up by her indiscreet mother, who had taught her to call the gentleman Papa and herself Mamma; that the name she had been accustomed to, was *Louisa*;

that it was earnestly desired, she should be entirely weaned from every remembrance of her former situation, and instructed to consider herself as the daughter of the person she was to be with.

This tale was highly approved of, and often repeated, to prevent hesitation in the first recital, or prevarication, if a repetition of it should be necessary.

The reward, proposed to the ingenious Mrs. *Blackiston* on effecting this great business, was the irresistible sum of five hundred pounds, and an annuity of a hundred pounds a year during life.

Instigated by the pressing calls of necessity, and a heart panting after the gaieties of the beau-monde, she became indefatigable in her endeavours

vours to serve this generous pair, her future kind benefactors. She met in a lucky hour with a person, qualified to her utmost wish, being simple in her manners, unsuspicious and undefining in her disposition, and borne down by the complicated misfortunes of narrow circumstances, and the recent loss of a beloved husband and child, both taken off by a malignant fever.

This woman was brought up to town by a family, of whom Mrs. *Blackiston* had some knowledge, to be a witness in a cause they had depending in chancery, and was to return immediately after the decision of it. To prevent this she was directly applied to, and fifty guineas offered her with the young heiress.

The

The artless and credulous woman paid an implicit faith to all they related, and being naturally humane and fond of children, and reduced by her husband's and son's illness, and their funeral expenses to a very small pittance, she gladly consented to receive the little innocent for her companion, hoping to find no small relief from her engaging prattle and undissembled affection.

This grand point gained, it was next judged proper to report in the family, that Miss *Louisa* was indisposed, a circumstance imputed to the change of air, and a cold she had taken. Miss *Arabella*, during these transactions, was sent out of the way upon a visit to Hampstead to a relation of her aunt's, these wise
heads

heads deeming it improper to entrust a girl of her age with so important a secret, notwithstanding her known aversion to her little cousin.

Louisa's illness was now said to encrease every day, 'till it was thought proper that she should be deemed in the utmost danger. To carry on this farce the better, her aunt never quitted her, and the good Mrs. *Blackiston* was of so much assistance, and the child so fond of them both, that the sight of a stranger would break her heart; consequently a nurse was not only unnecessary but improper. It is true, this little victim was far from well, occasioned by a small quantity of *Ipecacuana* being judiciously infused in her drink, and as judiciously repeated.

The

The horrid Mrs. *Blackiston* too, in order to convince her great friends of her most sincere attachment to them, or, as she expressed it, to put the detection of their proceedings out of the reach of even fate itself, applied in a mean habit to a body-stealer, to furnish her with the body of a female infant of *Louisa's* age, telling him, it was for dissection, which the grave-robber, without any great hesitation, promised her to do. Accordingly the next evening a flag basket was provided for the conveyance of a departed babe, recently committed to the earth by its afflicted parents, but which was almost as speedily taken up by this disturber of the dead.

Mrs. *Blackiston* did not fail to attend at the time and place appointed, and
was

was soon put in possession of the little innocent piece of mortality. The basket was curiously packed up, and proper directions being annexed, it was committed to the care of a porter, and dispatched to Mr. *Bentley*, who was previously prepared for its reception.

The amiable projectour of this unnatural scheme was not long before she returned to her expecting friends, having only remained behind, in order to tell honest dame *Brisco*, (the person who was to have *Louisa*) not to fail attending that night at twelve o'clock in a hackney-coach, to receive her adopted daughter.

This wicked committee then sat down to supper with unusual satisfaction, and mutual congratulations circulated round the table on the
prudence

prudence of their measures. Mrs. *Blackiston*'s address and dexterity in it were particularly extolled, and a most entire friendship reciprocally established between them upon the noble basis of iniquity, and a most villainous fraud.

The poor little sacrifice to their ambition and avarice had a gentle opiate administered to her that evening, which, taking effect at nine o'clock, they knew would continue its operation 'till twelve the next day. To remove suspicion, the servants also were all ordered to their respective apartments by eleven, and the three perpetrators left alone, who impatiently waited the poor deluded woman's coming to disengage themselves for ever from this impediment to their general
advan-

advantage and benefit. At length the hour of deliverance arrived, and the sleeping babe was successfully conveyed into the carriage, destined to remove her from the knowledge of her relations, friends and fortune. This great work completed, the basket was unpacked, and the lifeless imposture dressed, by the hardened Mrs. *Blackiston*, in a cap and bed-gown of *Louisa's*, reserved for the purpose, and being layed in the bed, Mr. *Daniel* retired with the utmost satisfaction to his own apartment.

By agreement, at the expiration of half an hour, the whole house was in confusion. Mrs. *Bentley's* and Mrs. *Blackiston's* outrageous grief, with the violent tingle of their bells, roused all the family.

The

The tender uncle and faithful guardian now became inconsolable for the loss of his niece. They informed him with a deal of reluctance and tenderness of her departure. His sorrows flowed apace, and at decent intervals were interrupted by ejaculations on the increase of woe it would be to Mr. and Mrs *Parker's* bosom, when acquainted with it. He said, he feared the blow would be too much for them, and sincerely wished, he had never yielded to his wife's and daughter's entreaties, in bringing up that valuable child to London, as, perhaps, Mr. and Mrs. *Parker* might never forgive him the action, though resulting from a tenderness truly parental, and concluded with observing, that the
good-

goodness of his intention was his only consolation.

A letter of fatal intelligence was then written to the good divine by Mrs. *Blackiston*, the grief of the uncle and aunt rendering them incapable of performing that melancholy task, wherein a faithful recital was given of all their fatigue and assiduity during the child's illness. The account closed with several salutary quotations from holy writ, in order to excite these afflicted parents to patience and resignation.

Mr. *Parker* and his wife had not yet been able to conquer some alarming apprehensions, the first news of *Louisa's* London-journey had thrown them into for her safety. Her tender age they considered as
unfit

unfit for busy scenes, and her strength inadequate to the complicated fatigues of travelling, early rising, and the singular hours of a town-life.

The good man opened the fatal epistle, therefore, with a trembling hand and a heart deeply agitated, and found this new calamity more insupportable than any he had before experienced. He blamed himself as a kind of accessory to the untimely blasting of this tender flower, was amazed at his own remissness in not immediately transplanting it to a more natural soil, and saving this tender pledge, this emblem of their beloved child, from being subject to the capricious flights and giddy management of young unthinking relations, who had not the

the same call, to watch with carefulness over her.

Mrs. *Parker* said in a heart-wounding accent, that her *Eliza* had exhausted all her tears, nor had she one left for poor *Louisa*; but, continued she, I hope, the measure of my affliction is now completed, and that it will not be long before we are all re-united in that glorious state, exempt from misfortunes, where sin and sorrow are no more.

To return to Mr. *Bentley*; the mock funeral of the living *Louisa* was now performed with great propriety and decorum, and her name registered in the bills of mortality with the dead.

After this melancholy ceremony (or rather villainous burlesque) Mr. and Mrs. *Bentley*, under pretence of

of being disqualified by grief for the amusements of the town, made a speedy return into the country, attended by the trusty Mrs. *Blackiston*, and entered upon the immediate possession of Bentley-hall with its appurtenances, all which they deemed lawful prize.

We will here leave them to the enjoyment of their unjust acquisitions, and attend the little *Susan* (no longer *Louisa* or an heiress) to the humble cottage of dame *Brisco*, on the confines of Bedfordshire, the place of her destined residence.

The good woman had watched over her charge with the utmost tenderness, 'till the operation of the potion already mentioned was spent,
and

and the lovely child opened its eyes to new and uncommon scenes.

A little apartment, meanly furnished, was now her receptacle, and her only companion a plain humble rustick. She called upon the maid who used to be about her, and cried bitterly, to go home to her own Papa and Mamma. At length the good woman's kindness soothed her into some degree of tranquillity, and, by the promise of many little things, engaging to children, she became gradually reconciled to her new state. If she did not eat so well as at her uncle's, she was free from her cousin's ill-treatment, and the good dame *Brisco*, she found, did every thing to please her, instead of contradicting and tormenting her. She lisped
out

out a genuine, but incoherent tale of her parents death, her removal to her uncle's, and the London-journey; but the old woman could not well understand her broken accents, and, indeed, paid but little attention to what she said, her chief aim being to efface every remembrance of her former name and situation, and induce her to sink into plain *Susan Brisco* with satisfaction and willingness before their return into the country, lest the accounts she attempted to give of herself, should excite the curiosity and observation of her neighbours.

For this purpose she continued a whole week privately in London at her own expense, in which time *Susan's* tender heart was so attached by

by the maternal indulgence of the good woman, that she would now have quitted her dame with much more reluctance, than she showed at first in staying with her. Two or three changes of ordinary clothes had been provided for her, and the child being properly reconciled to her new friend, they took their places in the waggon, and soon arrived at their destined cottage in health and safety.

Susan at first expressed great surprise at their manner of travelling; but the old woman calling their conveyance the great coach, it infused an air of gaiety into her little companion.

A neat habitation, the unrestrained privilege of rambling in the fields, and several suitable play-fel-

lows made the child in a short time think herself a happy being, and totally erased from her mind every recollection of her past circumstances. She was amiable, to an uncommon degree, in her disposition ; meekness, obligingness and docility being her constant companions.

Dame *Brisco* put her to school, to learn to read and work, where she soon obtained the reputation of a remarkably ingenious and industrious little girl.

Thus did her days glide on in innocence, obscurity and contentment, 'till she attained her fourteenth year, when a gentleman's family happening to come to reside in that part of the country, by their means

means she became engaged in busier scenes.

The father of this gentleman had been nursed by dame *Brisco's* mother, which procured her no small consideration with the son, and was the means of her receiving great kindnesses from him, as well as a constant favourable reception at his house. The gentleman's name was *Banston*. His family consisted of his lady, a son of fifteen, and a daughter of sixteen years old. Mr. *Banston* was a person of a sociable disposition, hospitable to strangers, and fond of company. But from a dissimilarity in the choice and sentiments of himself and his wife (which rendered them very unhappy) he had contracted many peculiarities.

He was sudden in his attachments, and as hasty in his dislikes. When pleased, no man more friendly, no man more partial to his friends; but when once offended, none could exceed him in passion, resentment and rancour. A bad impression was never to be removed, nor a reconciliation with him obtained. He was extremely ambitious, and from an anxious pride, that his children should surpass every other person's, he sometimes led them but an uneasy kind of life. Their dress, when either company was expected, or a visit intended, underwent the strictest examination; and he was so accustomed to disapprove of their behaviour and conversation, that when he was present, they acted under continual fear and constraint.

It

It seems, his disposition had been early soured by disappointments, and the loss of a beloved friend, which he had never overcome, so that he, who at twenty was an easy and most amiable youth, now at fifty was become a capricious and intolerable old man.

Mrs. *Banston* was of French extraction, and no education. She was covetous, particular, and unaccountable to the last degree. Mean companions (if any) were her choice, her house her idol, and her servants her favourites; nor did she ever fail spending her mornings in her kitchen, where she revealed, with the utmost good humour and familiarity, every sentiment of her heart, and the conversation she had heard without doors. By this in-

tercourse, and a reciprocal compliance on the part of the servants, the news of the neighbourhood soon reached her ears, and it was customary again for her to retail this information to her husband's prime visitants, not concealing even the names or humble state of her authors.

Her girl she was, in her way, extravagantly fond of. Her boy she considered as an incumbrance, as no house, she would frequently say, could be kept either clean or comfortable, that was infested with men, and would conclude such declarations with sincerely wishing, that her husband and son were engaged in some publick employment, that would deliver her from the fatigue of their company. She had
no

no objection to a chearful glass, though not to excess, and took an immoderate quantity of rapee-snuff. She was credulous to a weakness, fond of no other writings than the ordinary of Newgate's, which she had but just the capacity to read and understand. Her fortune, however, was immense. Notwithstanding the thick cloud of ignorance, superstition and folly, by which she was surrounded, a spark of natural understanding would frequently display itself, so as sufficiently to evince, that education might have rendered her a very different being. The fault, indeed, lay in her father, who had never in his life attended to any other consideration, than the accumulating of wealth, in

which his endeavours had been constantly successful.

The young gentleman, whose name was *Charles*, was a manly youth, his face inexpressibly fine, but his person rather defective in point of gentility. Upon the whole, he answered pretty well the following description of the poet.

His eyes
The bright celestial blue that paints the
skies ;
His hair, a lovely brown, in ringlets
flowed,
And charms beyond the reach of art
bestowed.
His manners, open, artless and serene,
Declared the spotless mind that dwelt
within.

For his disposition, it was ingenuous
and humane, his understanding
above

above the common stamp, his memory extensive, and his humanity, complaisancy and equanimity, perfectly engaging.

Miss *Banston* was the reverse of her Mamma, having a heart susceptible of the most refined and disinterested friendship, and a taste for the conversation of the polite and well-bred. Her person was rather agreeable, but far from handsome, of which deficiency she was truly sensible. In her engagements she was most affectionately attached to her brother, and equally dutiful to her Papa and Mamma.

Such was this family, with whom dame *Brisco* was a common favourite ; for she soon acquired the art of serving and pleasing their various humours, and preserved (by being

mistress of a faculty, rare amongst the catalogue of female dependents) the unabated friendship of every individual in the house to her latest hour.

That my readers may not be at a loss for a similar recommendation upon a similar occasion, it is necessary to inform them, that by an uniform and invariable adherence to the single maxim of preserving secret every unpleasing and disgraceful expression, let fall by any member of the family, when disgusted or offended with each other, and revealing and repeating with the utmost improvement, whatever could conduce to dissolve their little animosities, and promote their general peace and harmony, did this simple honest creature render herself

herself useful and valuable to her superiours, as well as to her equals, and they again serviceable and kind to her.

Mrs. *Banston*'s notableness being confined entirely to brushes, brooms, and dusting cloths, and her daughter's genius inclining her to reading and musick, many domestick concerns were neglected by them both. Sensible of this, Mrs. *Banston* frequently wished before dame *Brisco* that she could meet with some clever tight girl, who understood plain-work, in order to take her into the house, that she might manage entirely that branch of œconomy. It struck the good woman at one of these junctures, that, if *Susan* could gain the favour and approbation of this very particular woman

and her amiable daughter, it might ensure her a happy provision in case of her death, and secure her from the necessity of turning out into the wide world, ignorant and friendless. She, therefore, just mentioned her to Madam, but with such a character, as the amiable girl really deserved.

Mrs. *Banston* was pleased with this proposal, and desired she might be brought to her the next day, promising, that, if she answered the character dame *Brisco* gave of her, she should neither want for kindness nor encouragement.

She was, accordingly, conducted the next morning by the good old woman to the house of her benefactors, and met with a very gracious reception. Miss. *Banston* admired her
modest

modest and genteel behaviour, and soon conceived a most sincere affection for her; while Mr. *Banston* would often say, that she was both a good and a clever girl, to which his wife would never fail to add, "ay, and much prettier than any girl in this country, and works surprisingly quick and well."

Susan, notwithstanding close application to her work, did not omit to make that advantage of her young lady's kindness, and the instruction of her masters, as to acquire some smatterings of polite education. The rudiments of the French language Miss *Banston* herself taught her, and by repeated lessons, and the benefit of conversation, she soon made herself mistress of it. Dancing she was taught at Miss *Caroline's* request, who

who persuaded her Papa, that it would be an infinite improvement to her, to practice that accomplishment with a companion. Besides these accomplishments, *Susan* had a fine voice and a nice ear, and consequently acquired no small judgement in vocal performances by frequently fingering, for her young lady's amusement, many fine compositions she was fond of playing, her own voice being greatly inferiour to this humble maid's. As to writing, her talents that way had been improved by the parish-clerk, who of his own accord set her copies ; and thus did she pick up piece-meal a tolerable education for a country-girl.

She had spent six months in this family, and had already established herself in the good opinion and approbation

probation of the several heads of it, when Master *Charles* made his appearance. He had been absent during the eight preceding months on a visit to his Grand-Mamma, whose favourite he was, and was entirely unacquainted with this agreeable addition to his family. *Susan's* dress was plain, but perfectly neat, and such, as sufficiently displayed the beauties of her person, which did not long escape the young gentleman's observation. As pride was by no means a part of Mrs. *Banston's* character, she did not look upon the innocent low-born *Susan* as any disgrace to her table, to which she was constantly admitted, unless when some extraordinary visitants required her presence elsewhere. Master *Charles* soon informed

formed himself by his sister's means of all the internal graces and valuable endowments of this young girl, whose person had so exceedingly engaged his admiration, and he secretly wished, that fortune had been more liberal in her favours, so as to have enabled this master-piece of Nature to have shone in a less humble light. In consequence of these impressions, he treated her with the utmost respect and kindness on every occasion ; for two years together that this brother and sister were inseparable, now in all these youthful pursuits and diversions *Susan* had a share along with them, nor, indeed, could they enjoy any pleasure without her, her modesty, humility and good nature recommending her most irresistibly to their favour.

Their

Their mornings were spent in some improving exercises ; their evenings, when free from the restraint of company, were alternately employed in rambling the beautiful fields, and in little frolicks suited to their age and innocence. In these amusements they were encouraged by Mrs. *Banston*, though sometimes scarcely tolerated by the Papa. But their days were not all to be Halcyon ones, for Mr. *Banston* having many acquaintance in Worcester-shire, where he had been a couple of months upon a visit, at his return acquainted his lady, that he had given one family an invitation to spend a fortnight with him, and that he should expect them in ten or twelve days time, The good woman was greatly discomposed by this

this information, and complained loudly, that she was not permitted to live agreeably to her own inclination, adding, that for her part she wanted no connexion with families who had so little consideration as to come and take up their residence at other people's houses for whole fortnights at a time, and wishing Mr. *Banston* would either satisfy himself with enjoying his friends abroad, or procure a large house for their entertainment, so as not to disturb her. To this harangue the husband made no reply, but left his lady to cool at leisure, and went to spend his evening with the parson of the parish. A footman was now dispatched directly for dame *Brisco*, as upon every occasion of discontent her company became essential. The
good

good old woman listened with her usual attention to Madam's new calamity, and having heard it out, took the liberty of recommending patience and resignation to her. "You know, Madam, said my dame, that Master is very hasty, and your not obliging him will but make a great disturbance. A fortnight will soon be over, and if I can be of any assistance, I will come every day and take orders for marketing, or any thing else in my power. Perhaps too you may like their company, and then the time will not pass so disagreeably."

"I tell you, dame *Brisco*, replied the lady, I hate these incumbrances, and it is very hard, when I bring nothing of the kind upon myself, that I must be obliged to submit

submit to them for others. I would rather have your company, added she, than any body's I know ; not but what I would gladly give my neighbours a dish of tea, or so, but it is horrid to be put out of one's way with a heap of folks at bed and board ; yet this is always Mr. *Banston's* manner of proceeding."

The genuine eloquence of the old dame at length prevailed so far, that the offended lady consented to make a virtue of necessity, and give her husband's friends a decent reception.

Great preparations were then began ; every window of the house was now opened, and the light and air let in upon some handsome furniture that had not been exposed to either for some time. Miss and her brother

brother were well enough pleased with the thoughts of company, but the poor *Susan's* heart had some unhappy forebodings.

In a few days a letter arrived, informing the head of the family, when and where he was to meet his expected visitants.

His countenance was brightened at the intelligence. A glow of satisfaction took place, and his good humour at dinner was uncommonly great. “*Charles*, said the father, I desire I may have your company for an hour or two this afternoon, as I have something of importance to communicate to you.” The young gentleman was by no means delighted with this request, or rather command, as he began to conjecture there was some disagreeable news
in

in store for him. He was obliged, however, to attend the despotick father's pleasure, and on his arising from table, and taking his hat, implicitly followed his example and steps.

When they were got a convenient distance from the house, Mr. *Banston* began to unfold the purpose of his heart. "I think, *Charles*, said he, that now you have attained your eighteenth year, and have very little of the boy in your appearance; it cannot be thought unseasonable to cast about for an honourable and advantageous alliance for you, and a most fortunate opportunity occurring during my visit with an old acquaintance, I have given the young lady's family an invitation to my house, and expect you will not
be

be deficient on your part in improving, and in due time effecting the great work I have begun for you. The lady's fortune is even at present very considerable; besides which she is presumptive heiress to a very fine estate. You will, therefore, be prepared for the important purpose of recommending yourself to her favour." A kind of ague-fit seized the young gentleman on this communication; but he was too well acquainted with the inflexibility of his father's disposition to attempt the least expostulation with him, or offer the smallest opposition to his will. Yet did *Susan*, all lovely, humble, and engaging, present herself to his imagination, while riches, honours and grandeur vanished before her, as mists are dispelled

pelled by the rising sun. He ventured, at last, to lift up his eyes to the arbitrator of his destiny, and perceiving that he impatiently expected his reply, uttered with a submissive, but irresolute tone, that he was all obedience. The immediate contraction of Mr. *Banston's* brow denoted a gathering storm. “Ungrateful and insensible wretch, cried he, is this the utmost sensation thy groveling heart is capable of; this the return you make me for my sollicitude for your advancement? Your veins, I find, are replete with the mean blood of your mother, not one spark of my spirit being in your whole composition; but mark me well, continued he, darting a furious look at the poor dismayed youth, you have but this one

one alternative in your power, viz. either to marry the lady whom I have chose for you, or to turn out, for I will harbour no disobedient children." The young gentleman would have exculpated himself from every suspicion of intentional offence, but the father would not permit him so much as to speak. "Let your actions, said he with the utmost sternness, be the test of your obedience ; I am not to be imposed upon by professions." A silence now ensued, the father feeling no small mortification from his son's reception of a proposal which had infinite charms in it for him, and the generous youth being tormented with a succession of unpleasing reflections concerning what was shortly to happen. On their arrival at

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the Parson's (who was Mr. *Banston's* oracle) the latter in some measure resumed his wonted good humour; for Mr. *Charles*, as he was usually grave, when under the observing eye of his father, he escaped those common (and sometimes both unkind and unseasonable) interrogatories with respect to his health, or the cause of his silence, which his father was usually teasing him with. After spending a few hours with this gentleman and his daughter, they returned upon the same unfociable terms to their own habitation, where the chagrin and anxiety of young Mr. *Banston* was soon discovered with an affectionate concern by his sister, and occasioned the gentle *Susan* some tender emotions. Miss *Caroline* was determined

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to have a private interview with her brother that evening, in order to inform herself of the unhappy cause of his apparent uneasiness, and administer every alleviation in her power ; for which purpose, the weather being fine, and the supper over at an early hour, she requested his company into the garden. Poor *Susan* would gladly have attended them ; but her master had found her some trifling, though indispensable employment, which obliged her to remain behind.

“ Brother, said this amiable lady on their entering the garden, I beseech you to give me a part in your present dissatisfaction. Something, I am sure, has happened between my Papa and you this afternoon ;

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but I hope, you do not wish to exclude me from the knowledge of it."

"*Caroline*, returned the young gentleman, my father has this day given a most unexpected and irreparable wound to my peace. You will too soon be informed, in what particular; yet why should I attempt to conceal the minutest circumstance relative to me from a friend and sister, of whose attachment and affection I have received such singular proofs? Know then, that this family we are now in expectation of, are not invited here upon a common visit; my father has a prospect of advancing my fortune by sacrificing me to a handsome estate and genteel alliance. My heart, my sensibility are now my greatest misfortunes; for as the one is not to be consulted with

with respect to its inclination; and the other cannot be attracted by the gilded pill of ambition, the deprivation of both would be now my greatest happiness."

Miss *Caroline* was extremely affected at her brother's distress, but kindly enquired, if he knew the chosen lady? He replied with great earnestness, no, and wished that it were possible for the knowledge of her to remain for ever as foreign to his heart, as it was at present.

"Then, brother, returned the young lady, what grounds have you for this great aversion and concern? Perhaps on your acquaintance with her, your duty and inclination may be rendered compatible; for notwithstanding you are not to be captivated by an estate, it is

not impossible, but the lady may both deserve and engage your affection."

"And can you, my sister, replied Mr. *Charles*, really be blind to my apparent prepossession in favour of an object you equally approve? Poverty is but a thin shade to merit in the eyes of the disinterested and unaspiring, how imper-
vious soever it may prove to the ambitious man; and I leave you to judge, from the affection and approbation I know you feel for the amiable *Susan*, of my sentiments of her, to whom her person is also charming, though in an inferiour degree to her mind. You may, indeed, lament the imprudence of my mother in casting such an attraction in-
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to my way ; but you cannot, surely, blame me for yielding to it."

"What you now tell me, returned *Caroline*, is really an unhappiness ; for notwithstanding I cannot dispute the extraordinary endowments of my favourite, and could myself overlook the article of fortune, yet, as that deficiency will ever be irreconcilable with my Papa's way of thinking, I could have wished you to have guarded against such a misfortune, You are sensible, she never can be legally your's, and I believe your heart incapable of every dishonourable intention. What then could you promise to yourself from encouraging such an inclination ? But as I am unacquainted with these tender feelings, I confess myself an incompetent

judge of them, and can only wish, that it were possible for your reason to subdue what it certainly must condemn."

"Never, never, returned Mr. *Banston*, will my reason condemn me for following its dictates; nor did I expect such a reflection from you. The only impropriety you can accuse me of, is the not retaining my heart like a sheet of paper, clear and unimpressed, untill my father should deign to stamp an image upon it according to his own liking. To what end are we then endowed with the property of distinguishing? From whence is our sensibility derived, and for what cause, if voluntary and subordinate? Why subject to natural bias and untaught reluctance, if spontaneous and

and irresistible? Why this imputation of undutifulness? because not correspondent with the opinion of another. But we will dwell no longer upon this subject. Preserve, my dear *Caroline*, the important secret with which I have entrusted you, and let my example warn you to be constantly upon your guard, lest you should incur the condemnation you have cast upon me."

Miss *Caroline* made an attempt to detain her brother, as her tenderness for him began to suggest to her that she had not treated him with that lenity she ought; but he abruptly returned into the parlour, and continued there without ever encountering her eyes, untill the whole family retired. *Susan* had had the honour for some months of

participating her young lady's bed, and sharing with her every secret of her heart; but, to her great surprise, Miss *Caroline* opened not her lips to her on their retiring, 'excepting to wish her as usual a good night. The poor girl, as fearing she had offended, was unable to take the least repose; nor was her young mistress in a state of greater satisfaction, inasmuch, that the morning dawned upon their sleepless eyes, and they both arose much earlier than their usual custom. *Susan* was informed by Mrs. *Banston* at breakfast, that she had provided her an employment which she might accomplish at mother *Brisco's* cottage, to which, she said, she must return for the succeeding fortnight, as they otherwise should not be able to accommodate

moderate the expected family. "I assure you, *Susan*, continued this lady, I had much rather have your company than theirs, and shall impatiently wait for the morning that, by clearing my hands of them, will restore you to your former situation."

Mr. *Banston*'s features by no means denoted his approbation of his lady's declaration, and the good girl, with an aching heart, now for the first time underwent a separation from the family, since the hour in which she had been admitted into it. She went, however, and the chariot was ordered to be brushed up to the best advantage for its master's use the ensuing afternoon, against which the young gentleman was also informed that his attendance was expected.

ted. Miss had orders likewise to pay particular regard to her appearance, and Mrs. *Banston* asked with a sarcastick smile, what commands she was to be honoured with; which ill-natured question Mr. *Banston* notwithstanding so far subdued his spirit, as to make no enflaming reply to. It had, nevertheless, the desired effect of discomposing him, and he flounced out of the room to the no small pleasure of his lady.

This gentleman in piquing himself upon his good breeding and complaisance, was very apt to overact his character. It was, indeed, his predominant foible, and no wonder then, that in consequence of this disposition himself and his son arrived at the appointed rendezvous four hours earlier than was necessary.

cessary. He, however, rather congratulated himself than murmured at this, as he doubted not but he should by these means establish that reputation for civility, politeness and good nature, which he had layed the foundation of in his last visit to Worcestershire.

On the appearance of a coach and six, which he knew to be his friends, this gentleman hastened with the utmost alacrity to be assisting to the ladies in their alighting, which office he performed with a tolerable grace. His son was obliged to follow his example, but was determined to observe a moderate and distant civility, nor suffer his desire of obliging his father to hurry him into a dishonourable or gross dissimulation. No sooner were the
expected

expected visitants alighted, than a volley of compliments were instantly exchanged between them, and Mr. *Banston* made no small parade of his impatience to meet his friends, which, he said, had exposed him to the necessity of passing some dull hours in the house where he had waited, but added, that they were amply compensated by the happiness he enjoyed in seeing them all safe arrived, and, he hoped, not over-fatigued with their journey. The young lady interfering at that instant, declared that she was neither sick nor sorry, nor did she believe it possible for her ever to be weary of travelling, if she had but agreeable company; but, added she, this sick beast, turning about and hauling at the same time a poor
little

a little puppy out of the carriage by one leg, has made my journey very uncomfortable. Mr. *Banston* would have relieved her of her charge, and expressed some obliging concern for her (as he supposed) little favourite ; but she soon gave him to understand, that she was superiour to every weak attachment of that kind, and only kept the poor animal for the pleasure of tormenting it. “ It is, said she, Sir, the most despicable little coward I ever met with ; for, would you believe it, I only endeavoured to promote an engagement between it and a middle sized kitten at our last baiting, when a few of her ladyship’s attacks, and a blow or two which its timidity extorted from me, has reduced it to the condition you now see it in.

Here,

Here, *Dick*, said she, calling to a footman, do take it out of my sight." This affair being adjusted, Mr. *Banston* next presented his son to the ladies, whom he saluted with an easy politeness. Mrs. *Bentley* expressed her great approbation of him, adding, that if Mr. *Banston* had but brought the young gentleman with him, when he was last amongst them, her son *Anthony* would gladly have been of their party, as it was; but that she had not been able, notwithstanding her utmost endeavours, to persuade him, that the assurance of his finding a companion much of his own age was any thing more than a deception; to which Mr. *Banston* replied, that if he had foreseen the disagreeable consequence, *Charles* should not

not have been left behind. The Squire then returning from the stable which he had repaired to almost immediately on his alighting, in order to see his beloved horses taken due care of, shook hands with the utmost appearance of affection with his old friend, and having examined *Charles* from top to toe, declared him with an oath to be a clever youth ; then addressing himself, with a look of much meaning, to his daughter, he asked her, if she was not of the same opinion.

“ Ay, Papa, returned the young lady, you are always very unseasonable in your questions ; I wish you would not address them to me.”

“ Well, well, said the Squire, I suppose there is no harm done, and I’ll take care for the future not to wound

wound your extreme nicety, though I suppose, my young master is no more a stranger to his father's intentions, than you are to mine; but take your own methods so long, as my friend *Banston*, (again shaking his hand) your mother and I are agreed; I shall leave you to your own inventions." The fair *Ara bella* tossed up her head, but displayed not the least sensibility of delicacy in her countenance. Her cheeks, indeed, seemed unaccustomed to blushes, and her *front unknown to shame*. Her destined lover had now an additional objection to suffering his heart to become an apostate to its primitive attachment. The masculine girl before him, though handsome, was an object of disgust, whilst the idea of the gentle,

de, the tender, the delicate *Susan* possessed his whole heart. How abundantly did he lament the disparity of their conditions, and with the utmost sincerity wish, he could exchange his to him unpleasing state for that of some humble swain, who without fear or restraint might entertain that amiable maid with the soft tale of love, and steal upon her innocent approbation ! In these reflections he was quite lost, 'till roused by the voice and sternly significant aspect of his father to other recollections.

When the ladies and horses were sufficiently refreshed, the carriages were prepared for their last stage, during which it was proposed that the Squire should take his seat in the chariot, and commit the ladies to

to the young gentleman's care. These changes being easily adjusted, the sociable carriages took their destined route. On the road, Miss *Arabella*, with that pert familiarity which a long acquaintance could only authorize, pestered Mr. *Charles Banston* with questions relative to his sister: such as, whether she was older or younger than himself; a romp, or a demure being; fond of rambling, or a lover of home, and twenty other equally idle and ridiculous enquiries: to all which the young gentleman returned very concise, though satisfactory answers. Miss *Arabella* found herself not a little dissatisfied with her companion's serious, though polite behaviour, and secretly determined never to be his wife, unless he cleared

ed up most surprisingly ; for why should she spend her days with a poor spiritless insignificant animal, while there was another man upon earth ?

The stopping of the carriage at Mr. *Banston's* house was to her a very pleasing circumstance, as she was heartily tired of being couped up with a young fellow, who gave her the spleen. She, however, artfully resolved to conceal her disapprobation of her father's wise choice, till she should be so happy, as to meet with an opportunity of choos-
ing for herself. In this resolution she alighted with all the appearance of satisfaction on her brow.

Miss *Banston* received the ladies in a very pretty manner ; but her mother absconded for some hours,
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to avoid the confusion of their first arrival. *Arabella* was pleased to find she had so exceedingly the advantage of her new acquaintance in person ; as for the mental accomplishments she was as unqualified to approve them, as she was deficient in possessing them.

Miss *Banston* soon perceived the dissimilarity of their dispositions, and hoped she should not be long separated from her much esteemed *Susan*, who appeared to her partial, but disinterested view a thousand times more eligible to be her friend and sister (if it had been practicable) than this haughty favourite of fortune. Supper being served in, the mistress of the house emerged from her concealment, and making a few silent curtsies to her

her unwelcome guests, vouchsafed to partake of their entertainments. It was not long, however, before she became pleased with Mrs. *Bentley*. Her want of breeding she mistook for contempt of ceremony, her narrow sentiments for prudence, and her indelicate wit and propensity to ridicule for good humour and smartness.

Her son and daughter beheld this woman's behaviour in a very different light, and found their hearts but little affected towards her. Mr. *Banston's* self-consequence and satisfaction was unbounded, and he industriously circulated the glass to the general approbation of the whole company, except his own children, who were incapable of such irrational enjoyments.

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At twelve they retired to their apartment, where Miss *Banston's* chagrin and regret was augmented by the mortifying absence of her usual companion. A fortnight soon elapsed in the imagination of the pleased part of this family, though to the displeased it appeared tedious to an almost insupportable degree; at the end of which Mrs. *Bentley* would willingly have yielded to the joint importunity of Mr. and Mrs. *Banston*, in lengthening her visit, had she not left her son behind her, who, she was informed, was far from being well. This young heir's constitution had been so greatly impaired by his irregular life, the wine and chase dividing his hours, that it was suspected, he was now in a speedy decline. Yet, notwithstanding

standing the urgency of his case, and the advice of physicians, he would never submit to the slightest regimen or confinement.

Mr. *Banston* prevailed, however, for Miss *Arabella's* continuance for the summer, in which time it was hoped by the confederate parties, that the intended union would take place, every preliminary of settlements, &c. &c. being already adjusted, and the wedding to be celebrated at either of the fathers houses, as might thereafter appear most eligible.

Miss *Caroline* was exceedingly mortified at *Arabella's* stay, as she feared it would prove an impediment to poor *Susan's* return ; a consideration with her of more weight, than even her dislike to the young

lady's company and conversation. Her apprehensions on this account were happily removed the very day of Mr. and Mrs. *Bentley's* departure, by her mother's declaring, she could no longer do without the girl, and that she should be accommodated by some means or other in the house as usual.

Miss *Arabella* was present at this declaration, and understanding that *Susan* was accustomed to share Miss *Banston's* apartment, begged she might not prevent her return; for of all things she loved a room to herself, and should gladly exchange her present birth for the one her Papa and Mamma had evacuated.

This ungenteel speech was very grateful to Miss *Caroline*, on her
humble

humble friend's account, and she proposed taking an airing that very afternoon by dame *Brisco's* door, in order to pick up the favourite and re-convey her to her usual habitation. No one opposing her inclination in this, the chariot was prepared, and the young ladies set forth upon their expedition.

Miss *Banston* before hand ordered a servant to call and acquaint *Susan*, that she would take her home in about an hour. As they were taking a circle merely for the benefit of the air, they were met by a beausish young man, who made a respectful bow to Miss *Caroline*, and cast a look of admiration upon the handsome *Arabella*. Miss *Banston* recollecting that she had heard her Papa mention the day before, that he wanted to

Speak with this person, she ordered the carriage to stop, and informed him of his desire. Miss *Arabella* was highly taken with the bold manly appearance of this stranger, and immediately on their quitting him, asked Miss *Banston*, who he was. The young lady replied, that his name was *Lelcroft*, an East-Indian, and a kind of steward to her father.

“Does he live near your house, interrogated the inquisitive *Arabella*?” “That is his habitation, returned Miss *Banston*, directing her view to a little box by the roadside.”

They then remained silent, until the chariot stopped at dame *Brisco's* door. Miss *Banston* was going to alight at the honest woman's

man's request, as she frequently did; but Miss *Arabella* declared that she wanted to return immediately, to write a letter which must be finished that evening. The good old woman then bid *Susan* make haste, that the ladies might not be detained. The worthy girl soon obeyed her commands, and appeared at the chariot-side in all her native loveliness.

“ Miss *Banston*, said the haughty *Arabella*, I hope you don't mean to incommode yourself with this wench this warm evening. She looks as if walking would be more natural to her, as well as convenient to us, to which she added, that she hoped, the cottage-bred damsels of Bedfordshire were not more delicate than those in her neighbourhood, where she never

was so absurd as to think a chariot necessary for their conveyance." Miss *Caroline's* good nature was greatly shocked at this unexpected speech, and poor *Susan* stood petrified with mortification and amazement. Recovering herself, however, she said, she would walk it with her mistress's permission, and hoped she should reach home before dark. "Ay, ay, do, my good girl, returned the imperious *Arabella*, do exert your utmost ability upon this occasion, lest if night should overtake you, you should be terrified with thieves or spectres." Then turning to the coachman, "Drive on, *John*, said she, we shall be late ourselves, and, perhaps, in as much danger as Miss *Rosey*."

Miss

Miss *Banston* was so nettled at this rude treatment, that she ventured to contradict her orders, and, addressing the dejected girl with the most friendly affability, bid her continue with her mother 'till the morning, and then come over both together, as she knew, her Mamma would be glad to see her mother as well as her. She then wished them a good night, and bid the servant drive home.

“ I am surprised, Miss *Banston*, said the proud girl, as they were returning home, to find you so mean-spirited, as to put such a home-bred low creature upon a footing with yourself. Pray, may I be permitted to ask, of how long continuance this unsuitable acquaintance has been?” “ Madam, replied Miss

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Caroline,

Caroline, Susan had too much humility to make an improper use of my favour; nor can I consider my attachment to her as a reflection upon my taste or spirit. Never was a worthier heart possessed by any one, nor do I know a person whose conversation is so grateful to me as her's." "Obliging Miss *Banston*, returned Miss *Arabella* with a sneer, and can she really converse? It must be then in humble strains. I suppose, indeed, she can inform you when neighbour such-a-one's cow calved, or, perhaps, what the good parson's text was. Well, sincerely, then you shall not choose companions for me."

Miss *Caroline* was restrained from replying as she wished, by the fear of incurring her father's displeasure,
if

if she offended this lady. She, therefore, remained silent the remainder of their little journey, and Miss *Arabella* amused herself with humming over a string of jolly noisy tunes.

When they reached home, Mrs. *Banston* expressed great concern, that they had not brought *Susan* along with them, and Master *Charles* enquired with a tender solicitude, if she was well? “Indeed, said *Arabella*, your disappointment is owing to me. Miss *Caroline* would have stuffed the creature in between us, but I took the liberty to oppose it, to prevent my being stifled, and from the supposition, that it was quite as proper for the girl to have an exercise, she must be rather more accustomed to

than a chariot ; but walking was deemed unfit for her, I think, and therefore your eyes will not be blessed with her divine presence (looking spitefully at him, and calling him stupid lover) 'till to-morrow morning."

Mrs. *Banston* laughed at Miss *Arabella's* wit, as she conceived it to be, and acknowledged herself of the same opinion ; for this woman's attachments were light as air, and her mind susceptible of every new or ill-natured impression. This behaviour of Mrs. *Banston* won Miss *Bentley's* heart, and she was particularly gay and lively the whole evening.

Miss and her brother were equally dissatisfied with this unfavourable turn in their mother's disposition towards

wards an innocent girl, who had ever before the haughty Miss *Bentley's* cruel ridicule been most deservedly esteemed by her. The young gentleman entreated his sister would favour him with a quarter of an hour's conversation after the family's retirement, which request she most willingly complied with. On their being alone, "What an unfortunate circumstance, said the afflicted youth, is the continuance here of this wicked and proud *Arabella*! What an unhappy change, my *Caroline*, will the dear girl find on her return, to be subject to this creature's cruel insolence, in which you see my mother is disposed to encourage her! and neither you nor I shall be permitted to show her the least countenance or kindness. I

shall never bear to be a witness of such injustice and barbarity."

"I am no less concerned, my dear brother, than you are, returned Miss *Caroline*, at this unexpected event, nor will the ill-treatment of that worthy girl be less painful to me than yourself; but I cannot perceive that the evil is to be avoided, and I think, therefore, we ought to submit to it patiently, and endeavour to soften these disagreeable things to the poor sufferer as much as we can in private."

"Sister, sister, said this youth, your philosophy and resignation are owing to your heart's being exempted from the feelings with which mine is tortured; nor will I hereafter (let the consequence be ever so fatal) flatter or deceive my ambitious father

father with the false expectation of my becoming a willing sacrifice to his unnatural will. I would suffer any calamity sooner than unite myself to such a horrid, depraved being ; nor shall I be able longer to show her any kind of civility."

" I do entreat, brother, said the young lady, that you will make use of your reason in this particular, and leave the event to time. If you enflame this cruel and revengeful girl, you know not to what lengths she is capable of running ; and should my father or mother have the least suspicion of your attachment to this poor creature, consider she alone would be the sufferer, in being driven like a criminal from our house, and, perhaps, exposing her reputation to many malicious censures. Do but reflect,

reflect, how much such a consequence would affect you."

This last suggestion was unanswerable, and too probable a contingency not to be guarded against. He, therefore, submitted to his sister's better judgement, and determined to bear this new affliction with at least the appearance of patience. The evening being far advanced, they separated; Miss *Caroline* being not a little pleased with the victory she had obtained over her brother's resentment and hasty resolutions.

The next morning dame *Brisco* and her lovely charge arrived at Mr. *Banston's* before breakfast. The good woman was apprehensive that her favourite would be exposed to many mortifications from this haughty

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ty visitor. She had, therefore, endeavoured to fortify her gentle mind, to sustain every such shock with meekness and humility, as the most effectual method of defeating her malice, and the only means of her rising superiour to the disadvantages this cruel girl would bring her under.

“ So, *Susan*, said Mrs. *Banston*, on her entering the parlour, I am informed, you were fullen last night, because you were not permitted to incommode Miss *Bentley*. I little expected such an air from you, who used to be so humble ; but I find, indulgences are to be established into customs, and if not always continued, the object of them can conceive herself injured.” Tears were the only answer this innocent

nocent creature was able to make to this severe and undeserved rebuke.

“Nay, child, added the humane lady, let me see no proud tears, but behave better for the future. You must expect to be reminded of your duty, whenever you are deficient in it. Come, go to your work, and let me hear no more of you.”

The poor creature's heart was ready to burst with affliction at this unmerited behaviour of her patronesses, whose smiles she had ever enjoyed before, and ('till this period) her uninterrupted approbation: to be sunk into such disgrace, unconscious as she was of the commission of any error or default, was to her young and inexperienced mind a most trying circumstance. She as yet was but a novice to the injustice
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and unkindness of the rich ; nor did she imagine that they conceived themselves licenced to treat their inferiours with occasional contempt and disregard, (without being accountable for their actions) merely from their superiour possessions ; that the wind was not more uncertain than their favour ; that they were out of the reach of expostulation, and deaf to conviction ; that from their determinations there was no appeal, however disgracefully or unjustly they might discard their favourites ; and that the world was prepared to acquit the mighty and condemn the weak, even without a hearing ; that in the single epithet of *rich* was comprehended all merit, beauty, grace, and that consequently the horrid sound of poverty conveyed

veyed sentiments diametrically opposite.

Dame *Brisco* perceived that Mrs. *Banston*'s countenance was not altogether so favourable unto her, as formerly; but pride and resentment being strangers to her honest humble breast, she patiently looked forward to some future period of returning kindness, and very confidently and opportunely (to save Mrs. *Banston* the trouble of bidding her) offered to breakfast with the servants; in which meeting with no opposition, *Susan* and she went down to the kitchen together.

The rest of the family assembling, the good girl was enquired for, and Miss *Banston* and her brother heard with astonishment of her undue humiliation. “Dear Mamma, said Miss

Miss *Caroline*, (presuming upon her wonted influence) is this new order necessary? I dare believe, Miss *Bentley* has so much good nature, as to have excused your not paying her a compliment that causes so great an alteration in our domestick customs." "Child, returned the insensible lady, do you think, the girl will either work or live the worse, if our ridiculous kindness is in some measure abated? I warrant you, the company of my servants will do her no harm, nor was she born to better expectations than the meanest of them; besides I think, she deserves some punishment for her rudeness last night."

"What is all this? What is all this? interrogated Mr. *Banston*, (hastily setting down his cup and saucer)

faucer) pray, let me be made acquainted with the merits of this cause, and I will soon give an impartial and (looking at Miss *Bentley* with a smile of complaisance) a satisfactory verdict."

Miss *Arabella* said, she had unfortunately given Miss and young Mr. *Banston* umbrage for only presuming to oppose the little plain-worker's being brought over last night in the chariot with her. She added, that she must confess, she was not aware of the consequence of her presumption, which had really been so fatal as to offend her young friends, and expose her to the resentment of the little cottager. "How, said Mr. *Banston*, his features swelling with rage and choler, have you two dared to espouse a pert girl's

girl's cause, in opposition to the sentiments of this young lady? Do you imagine, that she has been accustomed to such mean companions, and truly, when she condescends to make you sensible of the impropriety of your behaviour, you must affront her for that little insinuating slut, who shall out of my house directly? So shall you too, looking sternly at each of his children, if I ever hear, you are guilty of such a breach of good manners again." "Dear Sir, said Miss *Arabella*, do not let me occasion such a bustle, or deprive this little mortal of the happiness she has been accustomed to enjoy. It is certainly better, my Papa should be acquainted with my desire to return home, as I shall, undoubtedly, be
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considered hereafter as the sower of discord in your family, if I should continue." This speech had the desired effect, by adding fuel to the natural fire of Mr. *Banston's* disposition, and it was with much difficulty he restrained himself from giving his son and daughter the most palpable proofs of his high displeasure. They were commanded, however, to their respective apartments, and forbid to appear again, 'till they should be sent for to beg Miss *Bentley's* pardon. The good dame was then ordered into the parlour, and heard abundance of heavy charges against the innocent *Susan*, such as ingratitude, pride and insolence, and was told, that she should not continue any longer in the family ; but that, in consideration of the kindness they bore

bore her, she should still be employed in working for them, only that she herself must come, and take their directions, and deliver whatever her daughter completed, it being determined, that the proud huffy should never more be admitted into their house. This severe sentence was communicated with much reluctance by the good woman to the unfortunate girl, who received it with horror and amazement, and quitted this abode with an almost equal regret to that of our grand parents, when for ever banished the blissful garden.

Miss *Arabella* exulted in these proofs of her power, and consequently was too hardened to feel the least pity or remorse for the person whose destruction she was so industriously

triously accomplishing ; nor did she even offer to obtain the least mitigation of the unjust punishment, derived by her means on this injured creature, who departed with her mother in a few moments, labouring under a deprefsure of heart much more eafy to be conceived than defcribed. The honeft woman endeavoured to footh her dejected companion with affurances of her conftant attachment to her, and that ſhe was well convinced of her blamelefs conduct. She obferved, “ that when people had a clear confcience, they had every thing, and that ſhe muſt not be caſt down by the changeableneſs of gentlefolks humour ; for that it was uſual for them, to like one day and diſlike the next, without knowing why they did either. She added,

ded, that their friendship for that proud Miss was too hot to hold long, and that she, perhaps, would be restored to favour, when she least expected it, by their all falling to pieces soon ; that Miss and Master (God love them) were good creatures, and must have it in their power some time or other, to do as they pleased ; that there was no want of money, which must be theirs, when the old gentlefolks could keep it no longer, and nobody could tell, what might happen, if people would have but patience.

Thus cheer'd she this poor girl, and she was cheer'd.

Her imagination caught a ray of hope from that insinuation of her

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dame's, that time, by evincing the irreprochableness of her behaviour, might obtain a re-establishment for her. She, therefore, wiped away a few tender tokens of concern which involuntarily stole down her cheeks, and not only with patient submission, but even a kind of melancholy satisfaction, accompanied this maternal friend to her homely cot.

Miss *Banston* and her brother were ignorant for some time of these proceedings, not being permitted to make their appearance that day, as Miss *Arabella* vouchsafed not to make the least intercession for them, or graciously to offer them her pardon.

The father, indeed, was piqued in his heart at her indifference, but
was

was more incensed against his son, as it was beyond a doubt with him, that if the young man had properly improved the many opportunities he had had of recommending himself to this lady's favour, she never would have shown such resentment and neglect of him.

Miss *Caroline* being a general favourite with the servants, and Miss *Arabella* quite the reverse, though in the particular of reducing *Susan* to their levels, they were far from disapproving of her conduct, yet as she often occasioned them a good deal of uneasiness, they took the liberty sometimes of saying to their mistress on her making her usual morning-visits into the kitchen, that Miss *Bentley*, not Mr. *Banston* commanded in that house, adding, the

Lord have mercy upon them, if ever they offended her; for if she had the power of confining their master's son and daughter, they could have but little favour to expect.

The good woman listened with great attention to this curious harangue, and did not entirely dissent from their opinion. "To be sure, she said, it was very wrong of *Caroline* to attempt to squeeze a lady for such a trumpery girl as *Susan*; but that she thought, there was no necessity for all that violent bustle Mr. *Banston* had made, but he was all fire and tow, and soon set in a blaze."

"Suppose, Madam, said a sly wench, her cook, you were yourself to offend this fine lady, I wonder how Master would behave then; you

you must beg her pardon too, without doubt."

"No no, *Mary*, returned the Mistress, with some warmth, and the blood, as it were, ominously mounting into her cheeks, I never should do that, I assure you; nay, what is more, between you and I, though she is very *comical*, and can be good company, when she pleases, yet I wish with all my heart she had trooped with her relations, that we might have had none of these disturbances."

By this time the beautiful tyrant had descended from her apartment, and not finding Mrs. *Banston* in the parlour, had the humility to descend into the lower regions, there to search for her. "Lord, Madam, said she on entering the kitchen,

one is always sure to find you here. I cannot conceive, how a woman of your fortune can take any amusement in such a place as this," (looking round her with an air of contempt.) "We are not all, Miss, returned Mrs. *Banston* very coldly, of one mind, any more than we have all one face. I like it, or I should not do it. We have every one our particularities in something, and this you see is mine." "Your hobby-horse then, Madam, said Miss *Arabella* with much pertness, is a very wretched one." "I don't know, what you mean, Miss, replied Mrs. *Banston*, nettled she knew not why; but I must be free, though I choose to come into my kitchen myself, I do not love to see company there, and am coming up
into

into the parlour as soon as the tea-kettle boils." Miss *Arabella* laughed, but made no reply, and took herself up stairs directly, where she had the satisfaction to find Mr. *Banston*. "I believe, said she, Sir, I have committed treason against the little empress of these territories." She then related the conversation she had had with his wife, and the good gentleman joined in her mirth outwardly, but inwardly was not a little vexed at her himself. The lady mother soon emerged from her beloved retreat, followed by the foot-boy with a large tea-board full of tea-equipage, and on his setting it down, "Tell your young master and mistress, said she, to come to breakfast." Mr. *Banston* rubbed his face, while Miss *Arabella* sneeringly

ingly smiled, and the little gentlewoman, tossing her head with no small meaning, took her chair in silence.

Miss *Caroline* came down with trembling steps, expecting a rough salutation, but was agreeably surprised on opening the parlour-door, to hear her mother in a friendly accent accost her with "Come, child, come, we are quite ready for you; where is your brother?" Miss *Caroline* curtesied to Miss *Arabella* who just vouchsafed her a haughty nod, and her Papa took no other notice of her than moving his chair, to make room for her, which with him was far from being an unfavourable symptom. Mrs. *Banston* quite impatient to complete what she had begun, asked a second time,

time, "Where is *Charles*?" but before any reply could be made her, he appeared with a discomposed, though not very meek aspect.

"Why, *Charles*, said his mother, you look this morning, as if you had neither won nor lost."

"I am not, Madam, indeed, replied the young gentleman, by any means a winner; how great a loser I may be, I cannot tell." The father frowned, the mother laughed, the visitor bridled, Miss *Caroline* trembled, and the youth only was unaffected and unmoved.

Mr. *Letcroft* arriving, before this dull breakfast was half over, he was ordered into the parlour, and invited to a participation of their repast, which he declined with much af-

fection and foppish parade. Miss *Arabella*'s countenance was no longer overspread with the gloom of displeasure, but seemed enlightened with peculiar charms and graces. The object before her appeared in her eyes a worthy conquest, and as he gave evident proofs of great elocution, she fancied she should find him a very different lover to that her father had chose for her. The young fellow was, indeed, vain, inconsiderate and enterprising, and had long flattered himself, that his fine person and address would infallibly recommend him to some woman of fortune. Such a coxcomb, therefore, could not fail of interpreting the kind glances of Miss *Arabella* into marks of approbation; nor was his vanity at all mistaken on the occasion.

caſion. He read his happy deſtiny in her eyes, and promiſed himſelf, he ſhould reap no ſmall advantage from this lady's favour, could he but gain admittance to her. Miſs played off her artillery againſt him a thouſand ways, and the young man took his leave with a ſcheming head and heart, ſecretly promiſing himſelf not to be long before he renewed his viſit.

Miſs *Banſton* ſoon learnt the fate of her unhappy favourite, which ſhe communicated to her brother, and they condoled each other upon it. The young lady's humanity, however, ſuggeſted to her, that, though ſhe had not the power to repeal the worthy girl's baniſhment, ſhe had the means of ſoftening it, by giving her ſome re-aſſurance of

her unabated friendship. This thought she likewise imparted to Mr. *Charles*, who applauded her kind resolution, and would gladly have followed her example.

“Acquaint her, said he, my sister, with the continuance of my best wishes; and were you to add, said he sighing, that it is neither in the power of time, accident or circumstance, to erase the tender impression her amiable person and mind has made upon my heart, you would but do me justice.”

Miss *Banston* then cast about for a safe conveyance for this pledge of her friendship, as she was sensible, if she was detected in a clandestine correspondence with the disgraced maid, she should be considered as highly culpable. It occurred to her, that,

that, as she was perfectly restored to her Mamma's favour, she should not be long before she had an opportunity of enclosing a letter in the work prepared for the poor creature. She, therefore, determined to provide an epistle, and trust to chance for the rest, and accordingly she wrote the few following lines.

‘ I Hope, my dear girl will keep
 ‘ up her spirits, notwithstanding
 ‘ the recent mortification and
 ‘ ill-treatment she has met with, as
 ‘ the consciousness of well-doing
 ‘ and well-meriting is a support out
 ‘ of the reach of pride, ill-nature
 ‘ or cruelty. How much your ab-
 ‘ sence is regretted by me, your
 ‘ own feelings can best inform you,
 ‘ as I believe, the interruption of
 ‘ our

‘ our friendly and affectionate con-
‘ nexion will affect you more than
‘ any other circumstance or confi-
‘ deration; but confider, that, as
‘ events are fo uncertain, an agree-
‘ able turn may fucceed to our pre-
‘ sent difagreeable one, and that
‘ our enjoyment of each other’s
‘ company may receive an augmen-
‘ tation from this little feparation.
‘ I muft confefs, that I was igno-
‘ rant of the ftrength of my attach-
‘ ment to you untill this unexpected
‘ accident; nor were your merit
‘ and amiable qualifications fo juftly
‘ eftimated by me, as I now find
‘ they ought to have been. Then,
‘ for my fake, my valuable girl, I
‘ conjure you to take care of your-
‘ felf in every refpect, and let us,
‘ by a patient fubmiffion to my pa-
‘ rents

‘ rents present will, defeat the little
‘ malice of the cruel author of it.
‘ My brother desires me to assure
‘ you of his esteem and sincere
‘ wishes for a restoration to that
‘ countenance, favour and happi-
‘ ness you deservedly enjoyed a-
‘ mongst us; to which I, with an
‘ unfeigned and heart-felt sincerity,
‘ add mine. My mother is become
‘ as kind to me as usual, and I dare
‘ engage, that you may venture,
‘ without any hazard of detection,
‘ to enclose me an account of your
‘ present situation, only cautioning
‘ my dame to deliver the bundle
‘ into my hands. Give me the sa-
‘ tisfactory assurance, that you will
‘ comply with the united request of
‘ *Charles* and myself, to live in pa-
‘ tient

‘tient expectation of better days,
‘and rely upon our unabated and
‘unalterable friendship. I am,

My dear girl,

Your’s affectionately,

C. B.

Susan was most agreeably surprised by this token of her young lady’s esteem, of which she had not the least expectation. It contributed not a little to the alleviation of her concern, and the mention of young *Mr. Banston’s* good wishes was to her most salutary and reviving. “I should be highly blameable, said she, after having perused the pleasing contents, as well as ungrateful, if I were not to comply with my dear young mistress’s kind injunction. My heart is, indeed,

art-

artless and inexperienced, but perfectly susceptible of gratitude, friendship and affection, and though I am ignorant of those bad practices of the world, deceit and injustice, yet I am truly sensible of the worth of their opposite virtues. I will, therefore, give my young lady a faithful account of the satisfaction I have received from her condescension and goodness, and that her commands shall be punctually obeyed; but that I will continue to cherish a humble hope of being restored to happiness and her. Yet, alas! said she, from a gentle emotion she then felt in her bosom, in what manner can I express my acknowledgements for my young master's kindness, without either being too cold or too warm in my expressions?

sions ? Were I upon this occasion to follow the ingenuous dictates of my heart, I could with pleasure fill whole sheets with his praises ; but it must not be." After some hesitation, she provided herself with proper implements for returning her humble thanks to her young lady, whom she addressed in the following terms.

Honoured Madam,

I Am incapable of expressing the grateful and happy sentiments, with which your condescending letter has inspired me. It was all I could either wish or want, to reconcile me to a fate (however severe in itself or unjustly incurred) at this juncture inevitable. Believe me, my good
Madam,

‘ Madam, that, as it was ever my
‘ delight to obey your kind com-
‘ mands in my happiest days, I shall
‘ with no less willingness, in my
‘ fallen state, adopt them as my
‘ rule of action. My good dame’s
‘ redoubled tenderness, and the in-
‘ junctions with which you have
‘ honoured me, will entirely dispel
‘ every mortifying reflection from
‘ my heart, and, in exchange, fur-
‘ nish me with happy expectations.
‘ I am extremely glad to hear that
‘ your Mamma’s wrath is appeased
‘ towards you; and when once I
‘ can receive the agreeable infor-
‘ mation of my being no longer the
‘ innocent interrupter of your fami-
‘ ly-peace, I shall sit down quite
‘ satisfied. My humble acknow-
‘ ledgements attend my young mas-
‘ ter

' ter for his kind wishes, and per-
 ' mit me to assure you, that you
 ' shall never have reason to repent
 ' your condescension and goodness
 ' to a poor destitute and obscure
 ' creature, if continual gratitude,
 ' and faithful devotion to your ser-
 ' vice, can compensate the honour
 ' and happiness you have confer-
 ' red upon,

Madam,

Your dutiful and respectful
 servant,

S. B.

This letter was conveyed in the
 method appointed to the hands of
 Miss *Banston*, who was greatly
 pleased with her friend's resignation,
 and imparted the contents to her
 brother for his satisfaction.

Whilst

Whilst this innocent correspondence was carried on by Miss *Caroline* and her beloved *Susan*, another correspondence of a very different nature was commenced by the haughty and indiscreet Miss *Bentley*. Mr. *Letcroft*, in conformity to his resolutions already mentioned, had repeated his visits at Mr. *Banston's* on various pretenses, untill he believed he had received sufficient encouragement from *Arabella* to begin an epistolary attack, and having consulted a variety of authors for a suitable address, he *skimmed the cream* of them all, and, being supported by an inconceivable share of vanity and self-sufficiency, with much inward approbation committed his exalted sentiments to paper, as follows :

Most

Most adorable Lady,

‘ **I** F a wretch of such inferiority
‘ to your transcendent merit
‘ and superlative advantages of for-
‘ tune, as I most sensibly feel my-
‘ self to be, may be indulged with
‘ your gracious and condescending
‘ permission for thus presumptuously
‘ addressing you, I shall have at-
‘ tained the summit of my ambitious
‘ wishes. Impute my inability, to
‘ speak you what you are, to the
‘ superabundance of my admiration,
‘ though utterly as unable to have
‘ suppressed the audacious confes-
‘ sion of my being most irresistibly
‘ captivated by your resplendent
‘ charms. Should these few con-
‘ temptible and insufficient lines
‘ have the superlative good fortune
‘ to meet with favour in your aus-
‘ picious

• picious eyes, I should be the hap-
• piest of mortals. For my circum-
• stances, though contracted and
• despicable, I am confident, they
• never will, by a lady of your un-
• limited generosity, be imputed to
• me as a crime, since it is a misfor-
• tune commonly incidental to men
• of merit. My birth, I will be
• bold to say, is unexceptionable,
• and were you capable of bestow-
• ing the minuteſt favour upon me,
• your humble ſlave, my deepeſt
• gratitude, ſublimeſt regard and
• profoundeſt ſubmiſſion ſhould be
• the offering, to be always preſent-
• ed at the ſhrine of your beauty.
• I am with the moſt extatick devo-
• tion, Madam,

Your unchangeable admirer,

Sam. Letcroft.

This

This extraordinary billet was delivered to the young lady, by a countryman properly instructed, in one of her morning-rambles; for she had affected solitude and private walks, from the time her heart first received this notable impression. The contents were highly grateful to her vanity, and she convinced the authour by the kindest looks at their next interview at Mr, *Banston's*, that he had perfectly succeeded in his attempt to obtain her favour. Many epistles of a similar stile and nature with the preceeding one were conveyed to this fair one in the heroick manner above-mentioned; but as the specimen we have already inserted, will give our readers a sufficient idea of them, we shall not trouble them with any more.

Let

Let it suffice to say, that Miss *Arabella* was so far won by this Quixot's adoration, that this correspondence was soon productive of an assignation, that assignation of others, and those again of vows, oaths, and all the attestations of love, which were at length improved into an absolute agreement of uniting their fates. This resolution being taken, it was soon after accomplished, in the manner that shall be unfolded. Miss *Arabella* and her happy swain having both passed the period enacted by the legislature for rendering such transactions valid, it was agreed that a special licence should be procured, which done, the day was fixed, and the scheme having been previously concerted between them of Miss's elopement for a few hours,

the courageous lady punctually attended the irresistible Mr. *Letcroft* to the parish-church, where the ceremony was performed by a young divine, (who had obtained leave from the rector to marry a friend of his there, without revealing their names,) for which excellent service he obtained a handsome gratuity. The ceremony over, the happy pair spent a short time after together at a farm-house, and then returned to Mr. *Banston's* with as hardened a countenance, as if nothing had happened. Whilst the dinner was upon table, the post arrived, and two letters were brought in, one for Mr. *Banston*, the other for *Arabella*. They severally contained an account of her brother's death, at which she seemed far from being shocked,

shocked, as she said, "no other could be expected from the drunken life he led."

Mr. *Banston* continued very thoughtfull the rest of the day, occasioned by this lady's additional fortune, and her father's enquiries, whether the young folks were not impatient to change their conditions. Some company he had engaged to spend the afternoon with him, delivered his son from an immediate severe persecution and, perhaps, total reprobation of his father; and the succeeding letter of *Susan's* to Miss *Banston* prepared him to ward every bad consequence, when he was attacked.

Honoured Madam,

‘ I think myself bound to inform
 ‘ you, that Miss *Bentley* was this
 ‘ morning married to Mr. *Letcroft*
 ‘ at our parish-church. You know,
 ‘ the clerk is a relation of my mother’s,
 ‘ to whom he communicated
 ‘ the news in confidence, (being
 ‘ bribed to secrecy by a fee of a
 ‘ couple of guineas,) and she permitted
 ‘ me to make you acquainted
 ‘ with it.”

‘ I must acknowledge, I am far
 ‘ from being concerned at this
 ‘ event, as I am tempted to flatter
 ‘ myself, it will make an opening
 ‘ for me with your Mamma : yet I
 ‘ should be incapable of this selfish
 ‘ joy, did I apprehend that the lady’s
 ‘ unfuitable choice would be
 ‘ productive of any unhappy consequence

' quence to her ; but as I believe
 ' Mr. *Letcroft* to be both an honest
 ' and (notwithstanding his vanity
 ' and self-love) a good-natured
 ' man, and her relations fondness
 ' for her so extensive, as not to ad-
 ' mit a doubt of her being forgiven,
 ' I do again acknowledge, I rejoice
 ' at it, as she will be removed
 ' thereby from a family, where her
 ' own disposition excluded her
 ' from the pleasures she might have
 ' enjoyed in the friendship and con-
 ' versation of my young mistress.
 ' As for the part she acted with re-
 ' spect to me, I have not only for-
 ' given, but excuse her for it, *youth*
 ' and *prosperity* having rendered
 ' her too *vain* to be sensible of, or
 ' compassionate with regard to mis-
 ' fortunes she cannot feel. May

‘ you, Madam, be exempt from
‘ every blame and mortification on
‘ this account, and it will greatly
‘ contribute to the happiness and
‘ tranquillity of,

Honoured Madam,

Your dutiful and humble
servant,

S. B.

Miss *Banston*’s joy and astonishment on reading this well-timed letter were equally great, and she impatiently sought an opportunity of giving her brother a participation of both. It was not long before she succeeded, and the young gentleman’s exultation and satisfaction at this unexpected deliverance was inexpressible. His sister kindly cautioned him from a too great appearance-

pearance of felicity, to prevent all suspicion, and this affectionate brother and sister enjoyed a repose that night to which they had for some time been strangers.

The next morning Mr. *Charles Banston* received an early summons from his father to attend him, which he accordingly did without either fear or dismay. As soon as he appeared before him, "Never was man," said the father, (perceiving his approach) so unhappy as I am, to have so good a prospect of aggrandising my family in a most desirable and flattering degree, and to be plagued with such a perverse untractable puppy, as you are: (then exalting his voice) I have now sent for you, to bring matters to a crisis; therefore answer me without evasion

or prevarication, are you willing to marry this lady, or have you prepared for your immediate decampment? for if you have the presumption to be refractory to my will, I renounce you for ever." "Sir, replied the young gentleman with an honest dissimulation, you may remember, I assured you of my obedience to your pleasure on your first communication of your prospect with respect to this lady. I will now venture to acknowledge, I then felt a reluctance to it; but time and reflection have removed all my objections, and I am ready to receive Miss *Bentley's* hand, whenever she shall be disposed to bestow it upon me." Mr. *Bansion's* brow was immediately smoothed, and his accent softened. "Well, said he, *Charles*, this behaviour

haviour of yours is highly agreeable to me, and you cannot wonder at my being offended at even the bare suspicion of finding you averse to such an advantageous connexion. I can now write to my friend with a good grace, and give you a respite of three months, before you assume the matrimonial yoke, in which time, I hope, the young lady's consent will be obtained. You may go, therefore, *Charles*, added he with a look of approbation; I have a little business to transact, and have nothing farther to wish or propose with respect to you." The father and son parted at this juncture with mutual satisfaction and self-congratulations. Mr. *Banston* was immediately struck with the many grateful scenes of grandeur and wealth that

presented themselves to his view, and exulted not a little in the success of his ambitious schemes. On the other hand, the unaspiring heart of the poor young gentleman felt the highest felicity in anticipating that long wished-for event of the little cottager's return. Miss *Caroline* was no less happy on having the particulars of her father's and brother's interview related to her.

A month passed away, without one advance being made for poor *Susan's* return, when Miss *Caroline* presumed to mention her in favourable terms to her mother, who, as she had been offended without a cause, was now again as soon pleased without a reason, and said, "she was willing to admit her again upon the very footing on which she had formerly

merly been;" but they were soon convinced, that displeasure did not so lightly pass out of the mind of Mr. *Banston*, for no sooner was her name mentioned to him, though with no immediate proposition in her favour, than the furious gentleman broke out into as violent invectives against her, as if she had given him some flagrant offence that very hour.

Thus were all the flattering hopes of Miss and young Mr. *Banston* totally defeated to the great concern and unhappiness of both. Mr. *Charles* sunk into visible dejection and despondence on being thus unexpectedly deprived of his only support, and his affectionate sister soon trembled, lest the consequence should be fatal to his health. Such,
G 6 how-

however, was her tender consideration for *Susan's* repose, that she avoided communicating this unhappy news to her. The young gentleman also forbore complaint, even to his sister; but at last he came to a resolution to conceal no longer either his sentiments or uneasiness from the dear girl herself, hoping to prevail upon her gentle heart to acknowledge a sensibility for him, that might hereafter be matured into love. This, he persuaded himself, would be a perfect consolation to him, and reconcile him to her absence, beyond every other remedy. He soon, therefore, made the experiment, by enclosing in one of his sister's letters, which she had entrusted him to seal, these few words.

‘ *Susan*

‘ *SUSAN* *Brisco*, if she will
‘ impartially consider her own
‘ merits, cannot be surprised at
‘ having engaged the utmost affec-
‘ tion and friendship of *Charles*
‘ *Banston*. This tender confession
‘ he would not have so long con-
‘ cealed, but from the apprehen-
‘ sion of excluding himself from that
‘ unreserved and candid familiarity,
‘ to which, by his sister’s means, in
‘ their days of happiness and peace,
‘ he was admitted ; but as now
‘ those blissful days are never more
‘ to return, and, by the rigid sever-
‘ ity of undistinguishing and unjust
‘ judges, he is deprived of every op-
‘ portunity of conversing with her,
‘ he could no longer resist the im-
‘ pulses of his affection, which
‘ prompted him to take this method
‘ of

‘ of soliciting a correspondence
‘ with her, as innocent as that his
‘ sister enjoyed. Mr. *Charles Ban-*
‘ *ston*, from a conviction of the pu-
‘ rity of his beloved *Susan’s* heart,
‘ would not even wound her with
‘ professions of the honour and pro-
‘ priety of his intentions towards her,
‘ as he thinks it impossible for the
‘ most depraved imagination to sug-
‘ gest a dishonourable wish con-
‘ cerning her. He hopes, there-
‘ fore, she will not think it an in-
‘ decorum, unworthy of her, to
‘ permit him to have this innocent
‘ and happy intercourse with her,
‘ nor be averse to discovering her
‘ genuine sentiments of a man inca-
‘ pable of making an improper use
‘ of the most favourable acknow-
‘ ledge-

‘ ledgements that her gentle heart,
‘ from a compassionate consideration
‘ for the repose of a friend, can in-
‘ duce her to make.”

Susan's heart underwent a most unusual perturbation on reading this letter, which she well knew was the hand of her young master. A tumult of passions soon rose in her soul. Love, honour, justice, gratitude and decorum, all prevailing by turns, at length honour and gratitude to her dear young mistress became predominant, and she determined to enclose this paper to her, and entreat her kindly to prevent every thing of the sort for the future.

Honoured

Honoured Madam,

‘ **P**ERMIT me to acquit my-
 ‘ self of a duty which appears
 ‘ to me perfectly indispenfible. I
 ‘ know too well your affectionate
 ‘ attachment to my young mafter to
 ‘ apprehend any bad confequence
 ‘ from difcovering to you what this
 ‘ morning occafioned me the great-
 ‘ eft concern and uneafinefs. Who
 ‘ could have conceived, that Mr.
 ‘ *Charles Banfton* would have def-
 ‘ cended to any other confideration
 ‘ for a being fo obfcure and mean,
 ‘ as I am, than that of goodnefs
 ‘ and humanity? I muft, my dear
 ‘ miftrefs, (pardon the tender epi-
 ‘ thet) entreat you to fave me from
 ‘ every fuch temptation, and affure
 ‘ your brother, that I have a mind
 ‘ fuper-

‘ superiour to encouraging the son
‘ of my benefactor to rebel, or bring
‘ the young gentleman (whose ap-
‘ probation of the little merit I pos-
‘ sess, was ever highly grateful to
‘ me) into a disagreeable and im-
‘ proper connexion. I can now
‘ (foreign to every former expec-
‘ tation) rejoice at a continuance of
‘ that prohibition of my return,
‘ which has hitherto sat so heavy
‘ upon my heart, and I do solemn-
‘ ly declare, that were your Papa
‘ and Mamma disposed to recall
‘ me to-morrow, I would decline
‘ what I should but yesterday have
‘ esteemed a glad summons, and
‘ chearfully forego the satisfac-
‘ tory enjoyment of your friendship,
‘ to preserve your peace. These
‘ sentiments and resolutions are not
‘ slightly,

‘ flightly, but the result of reason
 ‘ and mature reflection, and I may,
 ‘ perhaps, give you an early and
 ‘ convincing proof, that I am equal
 ‘ to the most severe injunction of
 ‘ self-denial, by flying from the
 ‘ place and friends I hold most
 ‘ dear. Do you, Madam, con-
 ‘ tinue to honour me with your
 ‘ friendship and approbation, and
 ‘ prevail upon my young master to
 ‘ consider me in a proper light, and
 ‘ I shall ever retain a satisfied mind,
 ‘ let my future condition in life be
 ‘ whatsoever it may. I am,
 ‘ *Honoured Madam,*
 ‘ with all duty and submission,
 ‘ Your grateful and obliged
 ‘ servant,

S. B.

Miss

Miss *Banston* was infinitely more surprised at her brother's proceedings than the amiable *Susan's*, for she had so good an opinion of the girl, as to believe her incapable of an ungenerous or deceitful action; but that her brother should be unwilling to entrust her with this secret of his heart, and not impart to her his intentions previous to his declaring himself to the object of his affection, was a great mortification. The young gentleman surprised her in the midst of these cogitations, and she rebuked him in gentle terms for his want of confidence in her, presenting him at the same time with his own testimony of love, and the good girl's honest and candid resolutions. He run over *Susan's* letter with impatience and concern, and then

then begged his sister's pardon for not making her privy to his weakness. "Alas! my *Caroline*, said he, I am undone! My peace, my happiness turned upon this dear girl's favourable sentiments of me; but as I am to be sacrificed to a false point of honour and delicacy, it is now indifferent to me, what becomes of me. I did not, I could not mean to offer her my hand under my present circumstances; but I was desirous of making the first and only impression upon her valuable heart. I would have contentedly waited whole years for her acceptance of me, provided I might have had the intermediate satisfaction of knowing myself to be the object of her affections; but what am I now to do?"

Miss

Miss *Caroline* was too much interested in her brother's happiness, not to offer her best assistance to console him. "I am, *Charles*, said she, most sincerely distressed upon your account. It may, perhaps, be encouraging you to a trespass of the filial duty and implicit obedience we owe our parents; but I own, I have no conception of a father and mother's being entitled to such a sacrifice, as their children's felicity. Therefore, if you, my brother, could but resolve never to marry the woman your father or mother disapprove, I think you fairly absolved from the obligation of receiving her, whom they may choose; and as I have so high an opinion of *Susan*, as to think her worthy of you in every respect but fortune,

fortune, I should not disapprove of your being upon the most friendly terms with her under proper restrictions, and it will be any consolation to you to obtain a promise from her, never to think of any other person whilst you live, and remain single unless with your consent, and you do not think it rather ungenerous to wish to lay her under such a constraint, I will solicit that satisfaction for you." This offer was most joyfully accepted by young Mr. *Banston*, and it was mutually agreed, that the important request should not be committed to paper; but that the sister should engage *Susan* to a private interview, and then propose it to her.

In about an hour after this conference, they were informed, that the
good

good old Mrs. *Brisco* was taken very ill, which alarmed them greatly for their friend, who by her death was likely to be exposed to new misfortunes and sorrows. But though the poor woman's disorder was violent, yet none of the *Banston*-family were permitted to go to her house, which was another affliction to them. She was daily attended, however, by their physician and apothecary, and supplied with every necessary at their expence. These helps availed her but little. She was declared to be in danger from the first, and accordingly on the ninth day expired to the inexpressible grief of the unhappy *Susan*, who was deprived by her death at once of her only friend and habitation. The old woman had got her relation, the parish-clerk,

clerk, to scrawl out a kind of will, by which she bequeathed to the poor girl all that she was worth. This all, after every thing was sold, (Mr. *Banston* burying her at his expence) amounted to eight guineas. With these determined to leave the country where she had experienced so many inquietudes, and consulting the clerk on the best methods for her proceeding, she by his advice resolved to go up to London, and get a service there in some honest private family, for she found herself but ill-affected to having any future connexions with the rich. The illness and death of the old woman had interrupted her correspondence with Miss *Banston*; but when she was quite prepared for her journey, and had engaged for her passage in

a waggon, she wrote one last farewell to her beloved mistress, which the honest clerk undertook to deliver himself the very morning after her departure. This promise he faithfully performed.

Miss *Banston* most sincerely lamented her departure out of the country, and felt the most friendly apprehensions for her safety. So lovely and so innocent a girl to be turned adrift, at the most critical period of life, into a wicked and designing world, friendless and unprotected, was to her a terrifying consideration; for notwithstanding she believed her integrity and virtue invincible by open attempts or the strongest temptations, yet she trembled, lest the same infamous and hardened wretch should in reality

exist whose descriptions alone had filled her so often with horror. For the lover he was outrageous and disconsolate by turns, and as often instigated by his affection to become knight-errant, and ramble in quest of her. But these romantick impulses were restrained by his good sense, and the affection of his sister,

Miss *Arabella*, on her return from a meeting with her husband, brought home the news of the little cottager's having taken herself off the premises ; nor could she forbear adding with a malignant smile, that she wondered what was her conveyance now. " Poor girl, said Mrs. *Banston*, she is much to be pityed, as in losing dame *Brisco* she has lost every friend upon earth ; for you know, Miss *Bentley*, continued she
with

with great gravity, it is not every one that chooses to countenance a bastard." "Lord, Madam, returned the affected *Arabella*, what is it you tell me! Why, I thought the creature was at least of honest parents, by the favour that was shown her in your house? Encourage her! repeated she; no, believe me, I would not admit such a person under my roof." "Madam, said Mr. *Charles Banston*, unable any longer to contain himself, is it just in your judgement, that the innocent should suffer for the guilty? Was the poor bastard, you mention with such detestation, in the smallest degree accessory or a partaker in her parents guilt? I think, added this gentleman, the world is not more cruel or unjustifiable in any one respect, than

in its consideration of such unhappy beings. Is it not sufficient, that a poor child shall be brought into existence involuntarily, and, from the culpable behaviour of those who ought to protect and provide for it, not only be excluded from the comfort of relations, and every title to property or provision, but also that a considerable share of the contempt and shame, incurred by the authors of its being, should devolve upon its innocent and inoffensive head? Wickedness of heart is the same in married as unmarried persons, and if the adulterers children are allowed to be uncontaminated by their parents guilt, why should the simple crime of fornication be hereditary?" No one made any reply to Mr. *Banston's* observations, and he retired

retired soon after to his own apartment, to lament there the loss of his invaluable girl, without restraint or interruption.

Six months had now elapsed since the marriage of Mr. *Letcroft*, and Miss *Arabella* had evaded from time to time the importunities of her father and Mr. *Banston*, to receive Mr. *Charles* for a husband, when she suddenly became altered, to an uncommon degree, in her shape. The servants soon perceived it, and having easy access to the ear of their mistress, communicated their observations to her. She communicated them again to her son and daughter; but they were far from being either surprised or sorry at the event, as it would infallibly in a very short time deliver them from her disagreeable company.

Mrs. *Banston* was unable, long to conceal her suspicions from her husband, who resented them highly, and said, “that if he could fix upon the original authour of such a scandalous report, he would prosecute him at his own expense.” Miss *Arabella*, however, discovering by a hint, which, if she had been innocent, would have been perfectly unintelligible, that her condition was suspected in the family, insisted upon her husband’s taking her home, which injunction he willingly complied with, from the hope of obtaining at least part of her fortune. She, therefore, quitted Mr. *Banston*’s the very day after she had apprised her husband of her intention, and retreated to the house of Mr. *Letcroft*, whose marriage to her was then

then promulgated all over the country, to the inexpressible chagrin of Mr. *Banston*, the diversion of his wife and servants, the satisfaction of his son and daughter, and the great disappointment and vexation of the lady's own family.

Immediately upon this discovery, a young gentleman made a visit to Mr. *Banston*, who was son to an East-Indian and his particular friend. He had just quitted the university, and was going to spend a couple of months in London; but having a singular regard for Mr. *Charles*, he importuned the old gentleman in such urgent terms to let him accompany him, that he prevailed upon him, and in a couple of days they reached the great city.

Mr. *Banston* had spent only one fortnight in the Metropolis in his life, and that short period at an early age; consequently every scene was new to him, and he rambled about with infinite delight. He had a few letters to deliver from his father, one of which was to the Mrs. *Blackiston* already mentioned. On calling upon her to discharge this commission, he was vastly affected at her situation. She had run through her ill-gotten Thousand. Her annuity was in the hands of a creditor, and she was compelled to reside in a little mean lodging, where she fared but scantily. Mr. *Bentley* and his wife had given her some disgust in not making her an offer of their house on her acquainting them with her distress, for which slight she inveighed

veighed bitterly against them, and threw out many intimations, that it was in her power to take a severe revenge. Mr. *Banston* payed but little attention to the harangue she entertained him with on this subject; but, presenting her with two guineas, he took his leave very politely, though secretly determining never to see her more. His young friend and he having wearied themselves in rambling over the town, stept at last into a tavern to take a dinner. The weather being warm, and they very thirsty, they had freer recourse to the bottle than was their usual custom. At length their brains being somewhat enflamed by the too frequent repetition of this agreeable remedy, Mr. *Rutland* (for so Mr. *Banston's*

companion was called) proposed regaling his friend with the humours of a certain house under Covent-garden-piazzas, to which the latter in his jollity agreed. They, therefore, discharged their reckoning, and sallied forth with warm heads, but honest hearts.

Their youth and genteel appearance soon gained them admittance, and a bottle of Burgundy being brought, Mr. *Rutland* enquired, if they could not be introduced to some young ladies that were tolerably decent and not very old practitioners? The mother abbess, who presided in this temple of Venus, after having presented two or three, without giving satisfaction, said, “she had one damsel under her roof, whom she feared they would find as objection-

jectionable for her coyness, as the others were for the opposite extreme; but as there were two of them, if they would make it worth her while, they should separately try what they could do with her." The enflamed Mr. *Rutland* emptied his pockets upon the table, and swore, if that was not sufficient, he would give his note for as much more; but the conscientious lady said, as he was a customer, she was satisfied with what was before her, and Mr. *Banston*, consenting to be served after his friend, was accepted upon easier terms. Mr. *Rutland* was immediately conducted into another apartment, and in a few minutes after a lovely girl entered the room, who with an undissembled artlessness asked him, if he had any business

with her? The young gentleman bluntly told her, he had, and in very plain terms informed her of what nature. The innocent creature's distress was apparent even to this half-rational man, whom wine had deprived of the better part of his senses, and it disconcerted him for a few minutes; but recovering himself, he attempted to take some liberties with her, which she resisted with unfeigned resolution and disgust, and retreated to the door, in order to avoid all farther indecency; but, to her utter confusion and grief, she found it locked on the out-side. Her retreat being thus cut off, she fell upon her knees, and, with tears and uplifted hands, besought his compassion. "I now perceive, said she, the horror of my situation. Believe me, Sir, I have been
most

most artfully betrayed into this snare. I conjure you, to recollect yourself, and spare an unhappy being from guilty violence." Had the young gentleman been sober, the beautiful girl would not have pleaded in vain; but the wine operating strongly upon his senses, he thought it unmanly to be subdued by a little whining hussy, who would, perhaps, laugh at him in the end, and therefore he told her, "it was in vain for her to try experiments upon him, for he knew the world too well to be imposed upon by such shallow artifices, and as he had paid his money to purchase her favour, he was resolved to stand to his bargain." "Ah! Sir, said the trembling maid, can you consider yourself bound by such an infamous contract, and remain deaf to the calls of
of

of honour and humanity? Can you really conceive, because a wicked wretch has succeeded in trepanning an unsuspecting and friendless creature into her possession, she has a right to sell her innocence, and compel her to accomplish her diabolical agreements? If these be your sentiments, I must inform you, that you have a person to deal with, that is neither capable of being intimidated by threats, nor allured by promises, and that your triumph over her can never be completed whilst her power of resistance remains; nor will she survive such a calamity to become a prey again to avarice and prostitution, for this weapon, snatching his sword out of the scabbard, shall be more merciful than you, in destroying an existence,

tence,

tence, when reduced to an iniquitous standard, which you whilst innocent refuse to preserve."

"Well, Madam, said the half-vanquished hero, as I find I can do nothing with you by fair means, and detest a rape as much as you, I shall resign you to my friend, who, I believe, is at present somewhat more clear-headed than myself, and will be more a match for you. So saying, he rapped at the door, which was instantly opened for him, and the poor girl locked in for a few moments alone. Mr. *Rutland* had happily carried off his sword, or the wretched victim had not lived, probably, to undergo a second insult. On returning to his friend, the abandoned procuress, who was in the room, asked him, what success
he

he had met with ? “ Why faith, said he, none at all ; she is the most squeamish little b---h I ever met with : but come, *Charles*, continued he, she expects you, pray, do not make her wait.” Mr. *Banston* was not in his nature a debauchee ; but fearful of exposing himself to the laugh of his more hardened companion, he arose, and, with a reluctance and agitation he could not account for, suffered himself to be led in to the frightened prisoner. Her back was towards him on his entrance, and he addressed her in the following terms : “ From the representation I have received from my friend, Madam, of your modest opposition to his indecent attempts, I come with very different sentiments to those of impurity and
guilt.

guilt. You have it now in your power to obtain a protector." The young creature, charmed by the offer, hastily turned about to make proper acknowledgements for it, when, to her unspeakable surprise, she discovered her young master *Banston*, and he his beloved *Susan*. Her joy, her astonishment, her shame at being found by him in such a house, as that she was now convinced she was in, though it obliged her to seat herself on the first chair she could reach, nevertheless did not reduce her to that common state of stupefaction so frequent upon occasions of surprise. Mr. *Banston* placed himself by her, and begged her to compose herself, for that she had nothing now to fear; that he himself would convey her safely out of the house,

house, and lodge her with a person of reputation, an acquaintance of his father's, untill she could meet with some eligible settlement. The mortified *Susan* thanked him in proper terms for the service he promised to render her, but desired, he would permit her first to account to him for the situation and dress in which he found her. He generously replied, she might spare herself the pain of recollection on his account; for he was satisfied, her innocence, not indiscretion, had brought her so near destruction. *Susan's* delicacy, however, would not permit her to leave one step she had taken, unexplained, lest a latent suspicion should lurk in that heart she now found herself more than ever desirous of being approved by.

by. She, therefore, informed him, " that the waggoner, to whose care she had been committed by the clerk, her mother's relation, had insinuated to her, when she was upon her journey, that he believed, it would be in his power to serve her, by recommending her to a very good charitable lady, one of his best customers, who would, perhaps, upon his account allow her her board and house-room, untill she could get her a place. Seeing me swallow this cruel bait, added she, as greedily as he could possibly wish, he had the art to start some difficulties and possible impediments to my success, but repeatedly assured me of his best endeavours. Thus was my mind, by the wicked management of this wretch, agitated with

with the alternate painful successions of hope and despair, untill I arrived in London. I then thought him extremely kind, on his preferring my interest so far to his own, as to apply to the lady in my behalf, before he even unloaded. He left me about two hours in suspense, and then returned with the agreeable news, that he had prepared Madam, by the character he had given of me, to be so much my friend, that it was ten to one but he had made my fortune, and that she would send for me in half an hour, as she thought, it was horrid that such a young woman, as he had represented me to be, should remain at an inn. I was so credulous, as to pay an implicit faith to every tittle of this fallacious tale, and

and rewarded my good friend, the waggoner, with a guinea, which he pretended to receive reluctantly, and by the time my little box was ready for removal, a hackney-coach arrived with a very decent woman, to take me in it. I put myself, without the least doubt or hesitation, under this kind stranger's protection, and was by her conducted to this infernal mansion, where I have been a fortnight this day, and was never till now alarmed with the least indecency. I have had constant employment at my needle, and have been deluded from time to time with the false expectation of being placed in different families of credit and distinction merely as a plain-worker. The old lady told me, that no person

son was approved in London but from their appearance, and that, if I did not dress decently, I should never be taken notice of. She, therefore, with my own money, procured me these gay trappings, in which I have never been dressed but once before, on the same pretense of a person of quality's being expected, to whose favour I was to be recommended, and the last time was told, that my disappointment was owing to her ladyship's being taken suddenly ill. The rest, Sir, you are acquainted with."

Mr. *Banston* then informed her of all he had suffered on her account, and likewise of his sister's intentions, and solicited her with the utmost earnestness to accept of his legal protection, adding, "that he
was

was determined never to marry any other woman, and that, if she would consent, a month's continuance in any parish in London, would (by qualifying her as a parishioner) enable him to make himself the happiest man on earth."

"Believe me, Sir, returned Susan, I feel the utmost gratitude for your noble proposal, but should think myself utterly unworthy of the esteem with which you honour me, if I were capable of involving you in such misfortunes, as your being united to me would infallibly bring upon me. I, Sir, am firm in my resolutions, but will, nevertheless, accept of the charitable offer you made me of putting me under the protection of an acquaintance of your Mamma's."

"Ah! my

Susan

Susan, said the young gentleman, why will you deny me the happiness of making a provision for you, more suitable to your merit, especially now you have reason to be assured that my sister would approve my conduct?" "Sir, interrupted this good girl, what your sister meant to propose, I freely offer you, nor will I ever bestow the least consideration upon any of your sex, whilst you flatter me that you desire the contrary; but I must entreat you, not to attempt to oppose my getting my living in the best manner I can. I was not born to better expectations, nor will your esteeming *Susan* a servant be more disgraceful, than *Susan* the adopted daughter of a cottager, and plain-worker in your mother's

ther's family. If you persist in refusing me the only favour I can accept of, I must again be exposed to a repetition of those horrid insults, I but now flattered myself you had delivered me from."

Mr. *Banston* hastily arose, and offering his hand to conduct her out of the apartment, only said, "It shall be, as you desire." On his making the appointed signal at the door, they were released, and he handed his beloved girl into the dining-room to the astonished matron. "Sir, said she, by what authority is that girl brought into my presence?" "Madam, interrupted Mr. *Banston* with a resolute countenance, by mine, nay more, by my single authority shall she be conducted out of this infamous

house, and safely lodged in better hands than yours to protect her innocence. I am the son of that family in Bedfordshire, of whom the kind waggoner informed you, and from whom, I fancy, you will hear farther in a very short time." Mr. *Rutland* gaped for the meaning of his friend's words, but was too far gone to comprehend them. The old lady had not, however, forgot herself, and finding her fraudulent practices detected, begged his honour not to expose her, and she would refund the money she had taken from her, notwithstanding she had paid the waggoner thirty guineas on her delivery into her custody. Mr. *Banston* made a merit of accepting these terms of accommodation, though he had many singular

gular reasons to incite him by all means to avoid a prosecution. The mother abbess accordingly refunded the money as well as what she had received of them, and bestowing many blessings upon the young gentleman for his lenity, which on this occasion was involuntarily, they departed. Mr. *Banston* saw his friend into a coach, and putting a proper person into it to convey him in safety to his lodgings, then helping his recovered prize into another, and accompanying her himself, he ordered the fellow to drive to Mrs. *Blackiston's*, as he knew her to be a woman of character, excepting in the article of extravagance. They were not long before they reached the mean habitation, where she lodged, and Mr. *Banston* there re-

lated to her all the particulars already mentioned, begging her advice and assistance in the disposition of this worthy, friendless object. Mrs. *Blackiston* appeared vastly discomposed at the story, and asked *Susan* with apparent disorder, where she was born, and how old she was? She blushed, and replied, “ she neither knew with any certainty her age nor place of nativity, nor as much as one relation that she had; that a good woman had brought her up with the utmost kindness and piety; that she had been unhappily deprived of her, now for a month that very day, by death; and was at present wholly destitute of friends, habitation, and all means of getting a livelihood.” After a long pause, Mrs. *Blackiston* said, “ If I could believe

believe it possible for you to pardon the wicked instrument of your misfortunes, I have the power of revealing some very advantageous particulars with respect to your birth and family."

Susan and Mr. *Banston* cast a look of astonishment at each other, and the penitent woman then proceeded. "Instead of being the poor destitute *Susan*, said she, that you imagine, you are entitled to a very considerable fortune, the particulars, if you will indemnify the principal agent in effecting the fraud, by which you have for so many years been deprived of the possession of it, I will no longer conceal." Upon repeated assurances of indemnification, and many offers of reward from Mr. *Banston*, who here took

upon him to answer for the poor astonished girl, she revealed every circumstance of that deep-layed villany, by which this unhappy girl had been driven to all her late misery and distress. Miss *Bentley*, as she was now become, sat speechless with wonder, horror and pleasure; but Mr. *Banston* was infinitely more surprised and delighted.

At length said the young gentleman: “How will my father be grieved and astonished, when he finds, that it is the daughter of his much esteemed and long regretted friend that he has thus oppressed? My father and yours, Miss *Bentley*, were friends from their infancy, until mine was sent abroad, where he met with my mother, and in consideration of her fortune consented to

to humour a whimsical old man in changing his name of *Taylor* for *Banston*. He was pupil to your Grand-Papa, whose friendship he yet enjoys, and I can tell you, both he and his wife were well a few days before I left the country. They have continued to lament you with unabated concern, even to the last letter they sent my father. The discovery of your being found, therefore, must be judiciously made, or it may prove more fatal to them than your loss." *Louisa* was still unable to speak, 'till she had relieved herself by shedding abundance of tears, in which Mrs. *Blackiston* and her lover encouraged her, as the only means to prevent any other bad consequences. When she was a little recovered, " Good
I 4 God,

“God, cried she, clapping her hands together with uncommon earnestness, how wonderfully gracious hast thou been to me! I have this day been twice delivered, and you, Sir, have been the generous authour of all my felicity. O! that I could but see my dear Miss *Banston* and My Grand-Papa and Mamma, I should then be completely happy. But are you certain, Madam, said she, addressing Mrs. *Blackiston*, you are not deceived in thinking me the person you mention?” Mrs. *Blackiston* smiled, and said, she was so sure of it, that nothing now remained, but to consult in what manner this important secret should be revealed, and, in her opinion, the sooner the better. Mr. *Banston* offered to go home the
next

next day, and inform his father of this happy discovery, and take directions from him for his future proceedings. This was mutually approved, and it was then proposed, that Miss *Bentley* should be accommodated with better lodgings; but she begged to be continued where she was, 'till she should be removed by her friends orders. Neither Miss *Louisa* nor her lover had much sleep that night, occasioned by their great surprise and joy. The next morning the latter took post-horses with the morning's dawn, and reached his father's before evening. Mr. *Banston* was most sincerely affected at having occasioned so many disagreeable moments to so amiable a young lady, as he now thought her; but, in order to extenuate the

cruel part he had acted, observed, 'that had she never quitted Bedfordshire, her family and fortune might never have been discovered by her.' Miss *Caroline's* joy upon this occasion was inexpressible, and received no small addition by her Papa's telling her, "he would send her and her brother to town, to conduct Miss *Bentley* to St. Alban's, untill he should send to them, and that, during their absence, he would, in a prepared way, acquaint Mr. and Mrs. *Parker* with this great and happy discovery." Mrs. *Banston* said, "that, for her part, she had ever thought *Susan* too clever and genteel to be a mean person's child, as *Mary*, her cook, could witness, they having often talked together about her."

The

The ensuing morning Mr. *Banston*'s chariot and four set off for the accommodation of that very individual, who but a few months before had been driven from his house in the most disgraceful manner. How did the brother and sister congratulate themselves during their journey on having been capable of distinguishing and countenancing a person now found to be so truly meritorious, notwithstanding every disadvantage she laboured under ! and such was Miss *Banston*'s impatience to meet her much esteemed friend, that the swift conveyance she was in, was not satisfactory to her. Every impediment discomposed her, and the necessary baitings she considered only as so many lets and hindrances. But, though

their conveyance was not so rapid, as to keep pace with her imagination and wishes, it was, nevertheless, sure, and, their journey being uninterrupted by any accident, they reached Mrs. *Blackiston's* lodging in a very reasonable time. The meeting between the two young ladies was inexpressibly tender and affectionate, and Miss *Caroline* said, "she now flattered herself, she had not only recovered a friend, but a long desired sister." *Louisa's* cheek was not insensible on this occasion, nor the fond heart of her lover unaffected. She replied with great modesty, "I hope I shall answer every kind wish of my friends." The evening was spent in that satisfaction which alone can be conceived by those who have experienced

enced a painful separation from the object of their affection and friendship, and have been unexpectedly restored to each other by some extraordinary event.

It was determined, they should continue in town the succeeding day, that Miss *Caroline* might in some measure recover her fatigue, not to mention some kind considerations with respect to the young gentleman.

No sooner had Mr. *Banston* lost sight of the carriage, dispatched upon the friendly expedition already mentioned, than he mounted a horse, prepared for that purpose, and took the route to Mr. *Parker's* habitation. The good man was in his study, fortifying his soul against the sin of murmuring by lessons adapted

adapted to enforce that kind of submission to the divine will, which he found himself most deficient in, when, hearing the trampling of horses, he lifted up his eyes, and beheld his old pupil at the gate. Though he was always glad to see him, yet his appearance never failed to revive in his too faithful memory many recollections, which were no less tender than painful. The beloved partner of his heart sat by him with an aspect truly benevolent, though deeply impressed with dejection and sorrow.

He got up to meet Mr. *Banston*, and after the usual compliments were past, the latter taking a chair, began to reflect on the nicety and difficulty of his task. He ventured, however, to introduce the subject
by

by saying, “ that he had the day before been informed of a discovery so surprisngly happy, and attended with such extraordinary circumstances, that he did not remember to have met with such a case in his whole life.” The good couple, in whose hearts the spirit of curiosity was extinct, betrayed not the least desire to hear the particulars, which not a little disconcerted the oratour. “ I think, Sir, repeated he, addressing himself to the divine, you would find yourself both diverted and interested by the relation.” “ There was a time, replied the good man, when I had an ear for the private or publick concerns of life, and an inclination likewise to be informed of them, which has now been dormant in me many years.

years. But if any happy event has happened to the deserving, and been productive of that salutary punishment of the unworthy, which leads to repentance, I sincerely rejoice at it." Mr. *Banston*, without farther encouragement or preamble, related every circumstance of the deep-layed villany, and the detection of it, only using fictitious names.

Mr. *Parker* and his wife were silent, 'till Mr. *Banston* had concluded, when, the latter being overcome by sensations she could not suppress, burst into tears, and the tender husband felt an amazing sympathy. "There is, said the divine, such a similarity of circumstances between the affair you have related, and our dear grand-child's fate,

fate, so far as we were acquainted with it, that I confess, I do not feel less emotion than my dear *Louisa*. I nevertheless rejoice with the happy family who have been so singularly blessed by the Almighty, nor do I murmur, because the same kind felicity is denied me."

"Sir, said Mr. *Banston*, suppose there should be some reason to hope, that your much lamented *Louisa* is still alive?" "Trifle not with me, said the alarmed parent; I beseech you, not to trifle with me. If you, indeed, know any thing of our child, speak it at once, and do not cruelly raise my frail and fond expectations with groundless suppositions; for as I am a mortal, so I cannot answer for the consequence."

"Then, returned Mr. *Banston*, I must

must beg you to prepare your heart in the best manner you can, to receive a long lost amiable child, saved from the most horrid of evils by my son, and who now, accompanied by my *Caroline* and him, will demand a reception and blessing from you, some time to-morrow or next day." The book fell from the trembling hand of the worthy divine, and tears of joy bedewed his venerable cheeks. "How justly, said he, may we say, the ways of heaven are intricate!" He then added, "I feel a joy equal and similar to the great patriarch *Israel* on the information of his recovered long lost son, and in his words I may express myself, for it is enough that my *Louisa* lives; I will go and meet her, that my eyes may be

be blessed with the sight of her before I die."

Mrs. *Parker's* uplifted hands denoted her sentiments, for the power of speech had forsook her, nor did she recover herself for many hours.

When Mr. *Parker's* mind had acquired a little composure, Mr. *Banston* and he began to consult together, what measures were necessary to take with the wicked uncle and guardian. "He shall, said Mr. *Parker*, make my child ample restitution, though I will not have recourse to legal methods, unless he refuses amicable terms of accommodation. The stings of his own conscience will be a severe and juster punishment, than any we can inflict upon him, because they will be dealt out in a suitable proportion to his

his iniquity by the great searcher of hearts, from whose knowledge nothing can be hid."

Mrs. *Parker* begged, she might be permitted to go over to St. Alban's to meet her child, but was over-ruled by the advice of her husband and friend, and submitted to their proposition of sending a servant to wait their arrival, and order them to proceed home without baiting. A letter was then wrote in the following terms to Mr. *Daniel Bentley* by Mr. *Banston*, at the good clergyman's request.

SIR,

' I Am desired by the Reverend
' Mr. *Parker* to inform you,
' that he has detected a most horrid
' piece of villany, practised by a
' gentle-

‘ gentleman of your acquaintance,
 ‘ to the great injury of his grand-
 ‘ child and ward *Louisa Bentley*.
 ‘ Every transaction and step of the
 ‘ vile plot, by means of which she
 ‘ has been so many years excluded
 ‘ from the possession of that fortune
 ‘ she is entitled to, has been traced
 ‘ and discovered. If, therefore,
 ‘ the villain does not speedily make
 ‘ that restitution which both law
 ‘ and equity direct, he will be ex-
 ‘ posed and prosecuted without any
 ‘ farther notice. The young lady
 ‘ is well, and now upon the road
 ‘ to Hertfordshire.

I am,

Sir,

Your humble servant

F. B.

This

This letter was immediately sent to the post house at St. Alban's by the servant appointed to await the arrival of the ladies and gentleman there.

Mr. *Banston* then entertained the happy pair with the particulars of *Susan's* merit and behaviour, and took no small blame to himself for his harshness and severity, but did not fail to tack that qualifying reflection to this relation, that that very accident had been the ground-work of the happiness they now enjoyed. Miss *Arabella's* conduct was then displayed in most unfavourable colours; for this gentleman was not a little given to the hyperbole, wherever he had conceived a disgust. Her haughty airs, the disturbance she had occasioned in his family,
her

her wise choice, and private marriage were all sung in dismal lays. The tedious hours whiled slowly on, 'till the succeeding afternoon, when the expected carriage made its appearance much sooner than they had promised themselves.

The good man with solemn pace advanced to receive this second valuable gift of heaven, his heart pouring forth a number of house ejaculations and praises. *Louisa* on her alighting made an effort to kneel to her venerable parent, but was prevented by his holding her in his feeble arms, with those transports of mortality (as he expressed himself) which were unutterable, and too strong to be suppressed.

At length, "My child, said he, again pressing her to his heart, this
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is a happiness I little hoped to enjoy, and in which all my human wishes are terminated. I have been blessed with this peculiar indulgence, that I might recover my strength, before I go hence, and be no more seen." Then recollecting himself, he added, "But my dear wife is equally impatient to behold you, notwithstanding I thus suffer self to be predominant in my heart. Go then, said he, my love, and compose her tenderly agitated mind with the certainty of your restoration to her maternal embraces."

Mrs. *Parker* had, by an involuntary impulse, retreated into a back-parlour, so differently does joy operate on different dispositions; and, instead of meeting the object so grateful to her heart, had concealed herself

herself from every one. She was, after some little search, and surprise of the company, found in a pensive serene state, seated on a settee. In that private room *Louisa* met with a reception from this good woman, which occasioned her such soft sensations, as she was scarcely able to sustain, and she rejoiced, that she should no more be exposed to such tender rencounters. It was many hours before their fluctuating hearts subsided into peace, and they became capable of tasting the tranquil satisfaction of reason and composure.

The fourth day after this happy event the son of the Reverend Mr. *Price* arrived with his father's congratulation and dispatches from Bentley-hall. The purport of which

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were, that Mr. *Daniel Bentley* and his lady had evacuated that mansion, and had lodged all the writings, relative to Miss *Louisa's* fortune, in that Reverend gentleman's hands, together with a faithful account of the arrears due to the young lady, which he promised should be amply satisfied in a short time. Young Mr. *Price* added, that they had quitted the country to avoid that scandal their bad actions had rendered them obnoxious to, and were gone to reside with their only remaining child, who was married in some part of Bedfordshire. This express was perfectly satisfactory, and it was proposed, that Miss *Louisa* should very soon visit the seat of her father.

Young

Young Mr. *Price* was bred to the law, and had the character of possessing fine abilities and incorruptible integrity. He was at this period three and twenty, graceful in his person, and engaging in his address, but confined as to his prospects of fortune, and unsettled in his situation. Mr. *Parker* had a great regard for the youth, and was strongly attached to his father by his grateful and friendly behaviour. Mr. *Banston* also said, he was a very promising young man, and deserved encouragement, nay farther, and (as he was sometimes given to prophesy) he added, that he looked, as if he would make his fortune.

During these transactions, the business of Mr. *Charles Banston's* heart

had stood still, a mortification and violence he could no longer submit to. He, therefore, the very first opportunity besought his *Louisa's* permission to propose himself to her grand-father. The worthy girl in whose breast love and gratitude pleaded his cause; consented to be his, with the approbation of her friends. Accordingly the young gentleman, with a diffidence, arising from the purity and strength of his passion, applied to his father, who willingly undertook to speak for him to Mr. *Parker*, being more sanguine in his expectations than the timid lover.

The affair being mentioned to the worthy divine, he said, he should receive a double satisfaction in bestowing his child so properly, the
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youth being entitled both by merit and obligation to the hand he solicited. His wife declared likewise herself entirely of the same way of thinking, and thus *Louisa's* birthday, to which there wanted now but seven weeks, was with her consent appointed also for her wedding-day. Mr. *Price* was invited to continue his visit, in order to be present at the ceremony; in consequence of which invitation he wrote a letter to his father, to acquaint him, that he should with his leave make a long stay in Hertfordshire.

Louisa soon perceived, that her friend's heart was most favourably disposed towards young *Price*, and as she was well acquainted with his limited expectations and Mr. *Banston's* ambition, she was greatly alarm-

ed for her peace and happiness. She communicated her observations to her lover, who confessed, his sister's inclination was very visible, and equally lamented the young gentleman's want of, (what they were assured was with Mr. *Banston*,) the one thing needful, fortune. The generous *Louisa* said, she would with pleasure resign half her possessions to purchase the satisfaction of her friend ; nor could she herself enjoy the gilded cup of felicity, if a bitter draught was to be her *Caroline's* potion. " My grandfather, said she, esteems the young man, and I dare believe, would warmly support his interest ; therefore, if we could but learn the true sentiments of his heart, we might strike out some happy method, as I
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am not without hope, that your father would relax somewhat of his usual inflexibility on this occasion."

Mr. *Charles* was a little sceptical in this particular, but nevertheless determined to watch the young man's behaviour, and *Louisa* was, if possible, to bring her beloved friend to confession, that they might have certain grounds for their proceedings. They waited not long for a confirmation of their conjectures, being accidentally ear-witnesses of a most tender conversation between the suspected parties in one of the retired recesses, described at the beginning of this history. They both lamented their involuntary attachment, and mutually despaired of ever being happy. "Were I pos-

essed in the highest degree, said

the young attorney, of fortune's favour, I should then with pleasure cherish the tender sentiments with which Miss *Banston* has inspired me; but it would be the height of folly and presumption in me, to flatter myself, that the partial consideration of my friends, which in reality constitutes what is called a fair reputation, could be accepted as a counter-balance to her fortune and expectations." "Why, really, Sir, returned Miss *Banston*, whatever merit a young mind may deserve in person and character alone, in the general run weighs but lightly in the provident scale of paternal estimation. I never would marry without my father's approbation; but my heart shall never so far fall from its own dignity, as to receive

a husband, merely his choice. However, we, Sir, have nothing in our power but mutual good wishes; mine you may be assured of, and I must beg, you would not hereafter seek occasions of engaging me upon this subject."

Louisa and her lover here thought fit to emerge from their concealment, and inform their friends, that they had discovered themselves. Mr. *Banston* very obligingly said, "that, had he the disposing of his sister, he would not hesitate to bestow her upon so worthy a person, as he had reason to believe Mr. *Price* to be; but whilst there was a superior authority, he thought it incumbent upon her to take no step without that sanction." Miss *Caroline* was greatly abashed at this de-

tection, and would have evaded the subject by some other pretense. *Louisa* begged, she would not be disingenuous, and render by her insincerity those proceedings faulty and blameable, which in themselves were innocent and natural. Their conversation was interrupted by a summons to supper ; and so much had the affectionate *Louisa* her friend's happiness at heart, that she took an opportunity that night to consult her Grand-Papa's judgement with respect to Miss *Caroline's* choice, and, upon his declaring greatly in his favour, retained him for their advocate with the young lady's father. A letter of invitation was dispatched to Mrs. *Banston* to her son's wedding ; but, so far from accepting it, she said to Mrs. *Mary* the cook,

cook, "Much good may do them with their bustle ! I am glad I can sit down by my own fire-side without ceremony or interruption. What signifies fortune, *Mary*, added she, if one may not enjoy it agreeable to one's own inclination ? Suppose now, for example, you were equal to me in that particular, and you loved routs, drums and confusion, I retirement, peace and my kitchen ; pray, would it not be as unreasonable of you, to lift me up superior to my inclination, as it would be for me to reduce and confine you to my levels, when you despised it ?" To all which *Mary* assented by a nod.

Mr. Parker and *Mr. Banston* being purposely deserted by the young folks ; the good man began to trace

happiness to its genuine source, which he deduced not from worldly enjoyment, but from contentment. “You see, said he, Sir, what miracles have been wrought in my favour, and had the humane author been ever so inferiour to my child in fortune and family, (and possessed but the intrinsic merit your son does,) I should most certainly have thought myself bound to bestow my *Louisa* upon him, if her inclination and his corresponded.” Mr. *Banston* remained silent, as his heart did not subscribe to the old gentleman’s sentiments, nor was disposed to contradict or oppose him in any respect.

“I know, continued this kind man, a young lady in the world, who esteems and is equally esteemed by
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by a person every way unexceptionable, except in the article of fortune; but why am I so mysterious? it is young *Price*, You, Sir, have acknowledged and consequently been sensible of his worthiness, and yet so blind and perverse is the judgement of some men, that, notwithstanding a wife with two or three thousand pounds would be the making of him for ever, yet she is withheld, truly, untill he himself, under great disadvantages and entirely unassisted, shall have removed by his industry this mountainous impediment." "That is rather hard, replied Mr. *Banston* hesitatingly; for if the sum you mention would beget an equivalent one, it would be exactly the same thing, as if the young man possessed
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it originally." "Those are, indeed, my sentiments, returned Mr. *Parker*, and I am glad, to find you are of the same opinion; especially as you have it in your power, by bestowing Miss *Caroline* upon this really deserving young man, to raise him above every difficulty, and obtain a happy, if not exceeding affluent, establishment for your daughter." The countenance of Mr. *Banston* honestly denoted his disapprobation of this scheme. "Surely, interrogated he, with a warm accent, the girl has not been so forward and undutiful as to have encouraged this fellow without my knowledge and consent?" "I do not know," said Mr. *Parker*, that Miss *Banston's* heart, being susceptible of real worthiness, deserves the

the harsh epithet you bestow upon it; but this I can answer for, that she has not the least intention to take one step in this affair, however her inclination may be interested, without the sanction of your approbation: but as I believe, they have a real regard for each other, I do not see, but their happiness merits our consideration as well as your son's and my *Louisa's*, and this I can say, that whatever sum you might be disposed to bestow upon your daughter upon a contingency of this nature, should be by me made adequate on the part of *Price*, and you know, the fortune my wife's family left her two years ago, will enable me to make good this promise." This was a plea that merited attention, and it was agreed between them,

them, that *Price* should settle in his profession at Worcester, as soon as Mr. *Charles Banston's* marriage should be completed, and be entrusted by his worthy patron with five thousand pounds, and that, at the expiration of one twelve-month, Miss *Caroline* should be bestowed upon him with a similar sum; but on no other terms would this provident father accept him.

Mr. *Parker* communicated his success to his children and the lovers, who, as Miss *Banston* was to spend the ensuing period at Bentley-hall, readily acquiesced to this proposal, nay, embraced it as a peculiar and unexpected happiness. The day appointed for the union of the lovers being now arrived, the venerable parent performed the ceremony with

with a satisfaction not inferiour to what he felt on doing the same office for his *Eliza*, and those reverend furrows, which grief and age had thrown up in his countenance, were on this occasion brightened with the glow of happiness and heart-felt satisfaction.

The valuable pair were prevailed upon by their children to exchange their retirement for Bentley-hall, as they would not consent to any other future separation than the one against which there is no remedy. In consequence of this resolution, the honest man resigned his benefice, and was in due time, accompanied by the partner of his heart, and, by long stages, conveyed to that mansion which for many years had not been remembered by him without
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horror and afflicting pangs. Mr. and Mrs. *Price* attended their arrival, and were informed of the promised advantages and alliance of their son, which news they received with their wonted moderation, gratitude and humility.

Mrs. *Blackiston*, though in reality undeserving of it, received a handsome gratuity, as having been the instrument of such extensive felicity, which she was not, however, long permitted to enjoy ; for being harassed by her creditors, and perplexed by the uncertainty of obtaining a reward for her double villany, (as it was not conscience, but self-interest, which prompted her to the discovery she made,) that vexation, disappointment, and the inconveniences her poverty exposed her to, in

in conjunction with her wounded pride, and turbulent and impatient spirit, brought a complication of disorders upon her, which kept her in a lingering state of misery and suffering, which continued for a whole twelve-month, and then put a period to that existence, so unprofitably, unsatisfactorily, and in many respects wickedly spent.

Mr. *Letcroft* and his lady, and Mr. and Mrs. *Bentley*, led a very uncomfortable life. The goddess Discord had established her seat under their roof. His being disappointed in obtaining the immense fortune he expected, notwithstanding Mrs. *Letcroft* was likely to inherit some thousand pounds, changed the meek, servile adorer into the morose, untractable husband.

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He contracted many improper intimacies, and when his weak brain was heated by a too frequent repetition of the social glass, he was wonted to bestow some rough compliment upon his lady's delicate bones, in despite of the alternate threats and entreaties of her father and mother.

Thus did the chain of events, derived upon this family, run. Agreeably to our limited notions of rewards and punishments, and though many instances in life are the reverse of this equitable distribution, it must nevertheless be acknowledged, that villainous practices are frequently discovered and detected, and that a perseverance in well-doing is productive of the most happy and

and agreeable consequences. Mrs. *Banston* was the only person who remained unchanged, uninterested, and consequently unaffected by these happy revolutions, though I really do her injustice when I say, she did not partake in some measure of the general satisfaction ; for her house was clear of every incumbrance for a long season, and she at liberty to pursue her particular inclinations without interruption, which self-enjoyment was derived from an insensibility of mind, neither to be envied nor coveted, as, surely, to a rational being it must be highly satisfactory to possess a heart capable of generous sympathy, and every humane and tender disposition ; for whatever exemption from the participation

cipation of others calamities this selfish narrow principle may confer upon its possessor, it can be by no means adequate to the reflected joys of friendship and benevolence.

F I N I S.

